



NAVY NEWS

December 2016



Bonnie clyde

● Royal Navy patrol ship HMS Clyde is reflected in the tranquil waters of King Edward Point in South Georgia during the ship's first visit of the season (see page 18)

Picture: The Rev Thomas Pyke, RNR

America calling

New milestone for F-35B test team

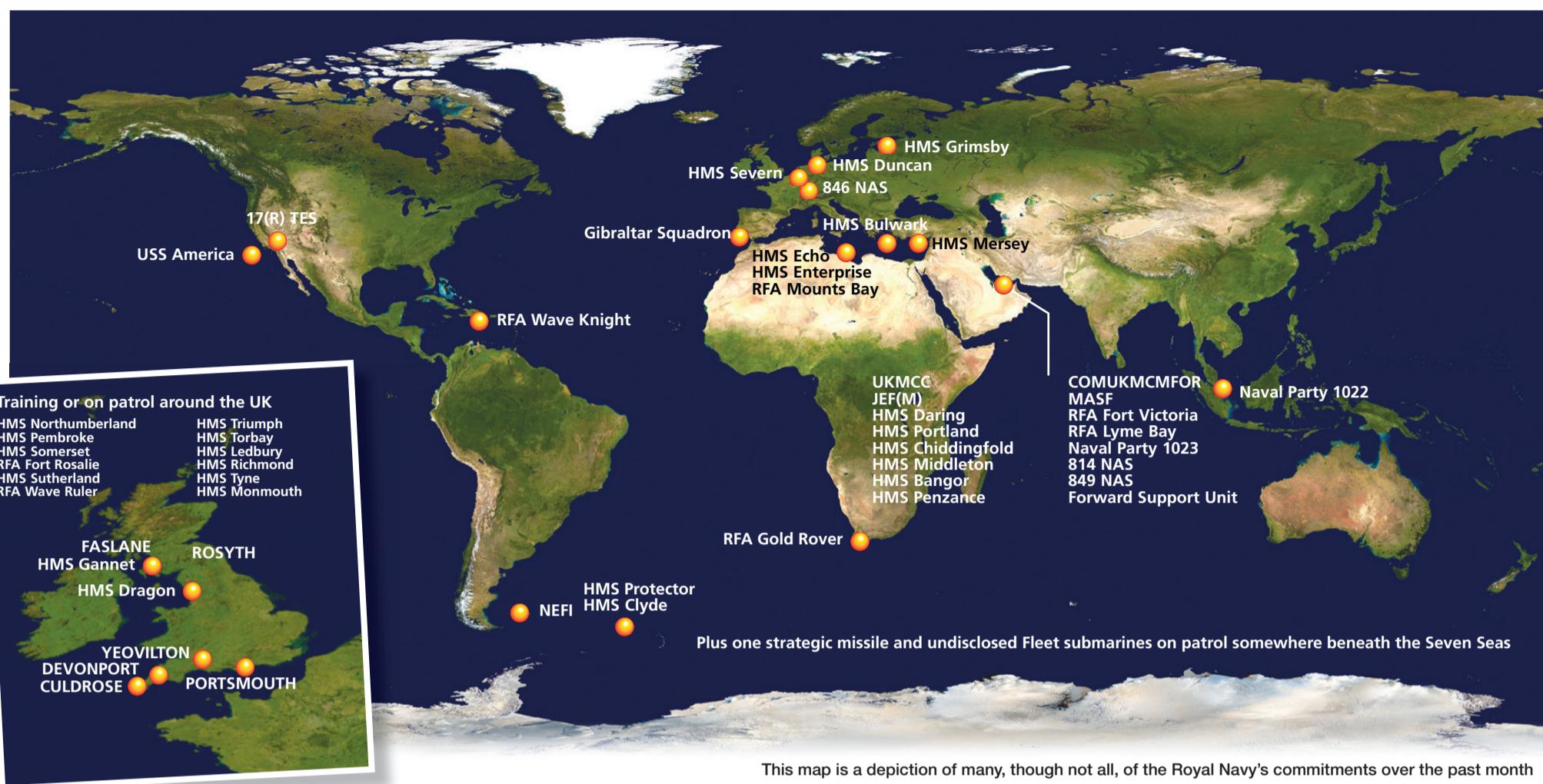
Eagles dare

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GLOBAL REACH



This map is a depiction of many, though not all, of the Royal Navy's commitments over the past month



FLEET FOCUS

Protecting our nation's interests

WE end the year with a traditional wintry feature from the South Atlantic, this time about **HMS Clyde** in South Georgia (see pages 1 and 18).

Also in South Georgia is **HMS Protector** (see page 4), where some of her crew embarked on a four-mile trek across the island, recreating Sir Ernest Shackleton's exploits.

RFA Gold Rover joined a long-running French mission to combat illegal fishing and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea (see page 4).

RFA Wave Knight was involved in a dramatic six-hour chase which resulted in the seizure of cocaine worth £26m (see page 5). Fourteen bales of illegal drugs were captured as a Royal Marines sniper in a Lynx helicopter took out the drug runners' boat engine.

HMS Duncan became the Royal Navy's first Type 45 to join a NATO task group (see page 3) as the destroyer joined German, Spanish and Portuguese ships in Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1).

Duncan's elder sister **HMS Daring** (see right) put her Marine Engineering Department to the test as they changed the engine on one of the ship's seaboots while at sea in the Gulf.

All five of the UK's mine warfare vessels based in Bahrain put to sea (see page 6) for the biggest test of the UK-US minehunting forces in the Gulf this autumn. **HMS Bangor**, **Chiddingfold**, **Middleton** and **Penzance**, along with **RFA Lyme Bay**, joined three of the US Navy's minehunters.

Royal Navy engineers have spent three weeks embarked in **USS America** putting the **F-35B Lightning II** strike fighter through its paces (see centre pages).

Personnel from **846 NAS** flew more than 600 miles from their home at RNAS Yeovilton to Germany via the US air base at Ramstein for **Exercise Bavarian Eagle** (see page 19). The CHF squadron enjoyed training high in the Alps.

The government announced that the first steel will be cut on the Royal Navy's first **Type 26** Global Combat Ship next summer (see page 5).

The last of 28 **Wildcat** helicopters and the very first of the **Merlin Mk4s** were delivered to the Fleet Air Arm at RNAS Yeovilton (see page 6).

The Royal Navy officers behind **Unmanned Warrior** this autumn look back on the exercise with a mixture of pride and relief (see page 16).

Battle of Jutland survivor **HMS Caroline** has been removed from the water for the first time in 32 years for restoration work on her hull (see page 20).

Our Remembrance features begin with a flypast of a Swordfish in tribute to veterans of the **Arctic Convoys** as they gathered in Liverpool to mark the 75th anniversary of the beginning of the operation (see page 11).

Royal Navy Rugby Union players headed to the Netherlands (see page 15), where they played a match to mark the centenary of the first RU match to be played in the country. Players also attended a service of remembrance at the graves of nine members of the Royal Naval Division who died there during WW1.

Naval Service personnel in the UK and overseas paused to pay tribute to the fallen during the annual **Armistice Day** ceremonies (see pages 24-25).

In Edinburgh the **Nelson Monument** on Calton Hill was colourfully commemorated as the landmark turned 200 (see page 21).

Finally, **Armed Forces Minister** Mike Penning talks to **Navy News** about his military background and his first impressions on working with the Royal Navy (see page 13).

Seaboot success for Daring team

MARINE engineers in HMS Daring completed the final stages of a full seaboot engine change while at sea during operations in the Gulf.

The Marine Engineering Department, which recently received a Fleet Commander's Commendation for their work, undertook an engine change on one of their two Pacific 24 seaboots.

They started the work during a maintenance period, landing the boat onto a jetty in Salalah, Oman, pictured right, prior to starting the exchange of the 800kg engine.

The swap was completed prior to sailing the following day and the team continued to fit the engine and new hydraulic controls for the jet drive while back at sea.

Led by CPOET(ME) Michael 'Ronnie' Barker, the team worked around the clock to get the boat working as the Type 45 returned to operational tasking in the Gulf.

"My team were excellent as we worked throughout the night in arduous conditions, overcoming a number of



unforeseen issues and having to adapt to the facilities we had available," said Ronnie.

"There was a real feeling of achievement and pride when we were able to declare the boat restored to full serviceability."

The ship's boarding officer, Lt Ryan 'Jack' Lemmon, who manages the Royal Navy contingent of the boarding team, said: "Daring has an excellent boarding capability; the embarked forces of 43 Commando Royal

Marines are complemented very ably by the ship's boarding team.

"Having both seaboots available again has enabled the ship to carry out successful boarding operations as part of the ship's commitment to maritime security operations."

Daring, the first of the six Type 45s, sailed from Portsmouth in September for a nine-month deployment to the Middle East and has monitored the movements of vessels - from fishing skiffs to container ships - in the Red Sea, the Somali Basin and the Gulf.

The Pacific 24 seaboot, made by BAE Systems Halmatic, is a 7.3m general purpose rigid inflatable capable of reaching speeds in excess of 25kts and is used as both the warship's safety boat and as a means of

deploying personnel to intercept and search vessels suspected of being involved in illicit activity.



navy news

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HMS DUNCAN closes in on the German replenishment tanker FGS Rhön and the Spanish frigate ESPS Almirante Juan de Borbón as she becomes the first Type 45 to join a NATO task force.

The ships, pictured *en route* to Hamburg in Germany, make up three fifths of the Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1), with the Portuguese frigate NRP Álvares Cabral and the German corvette FGS Ludwigshafen am Rhein completing the international task force.

Duncan, the sixth and last of the Type 45s, initially rendezvoused with the group in the North Sea to watch the Russian carrier Admiral Kuznetsov and her task group pass through the English Channel, across the Bay of Biscay and into the Mediterranean before handing over to other NATO units.

SNMG1 is the UK's maritime commitment to NATO operations, with Rear Admiral Jose Enrique Delgado from the Spanish Navy commanding the group of more than 700 sailors.

The Spanish air-defence frigate, named after the father of the former King of Spain, Juan Carlos I, is flagship for the task force, the third and final Spanish Navy ship to take on the role for SNMG1 during the country's period in charge.

The task force has taken part in a number of operations and exercises, maritime security patrols and regional engagement across Northern European waters and the

surrounding area.

Duncan's Wildcat of 825 NAS from RNAS Yeovil landed on the Spanish flagship during cross-deck landings, which also saw a Spanish Seahawk helicopter land on the Type 45.

The task group practised their close manoeuvring skills with a number of Officer of the Watch manoeuvres with the five ships in SNMG1 moving within less than 500 yards of each other.

Exercises also saw Duncan fire nearly all of her weapons systems, including her 4.5in gun, 30mm cannons, 20mm Phalanx, General-Purpose Machine Guns and Miniguns.

Personnel from all five warships also conducted boarding exercises on the FGS Rhön, with Duncan's team travelling in the destroyer's seaboat.

Sailors from Duncan lined the ship and fire hoses were operated towards the FGS Ludwigshafen as she conducted a sailpast.

The warships took a break from duties by sailing up the Elbe for a weekend break in Germany's great port city of Hamburg.

Duncan threw open her gangway to the German public for six hours to allow residents a glimpse of one of the world's most advanced warships.

The visitors included three-year-old Marie Vieten, who was mesmerised by one of the displays in the ops room as her mum Claudia took her on a tour of the destroyer.

Falling over Remembrance weekend, the visit – Duncan's second of the year to

Hamburg – allowed the ship's company to pay their respects at the city's Anglican church, St Thomas Beckett, and at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery at Ohlsdorf.

Prior to visiting Hamburg HMS Duncan made her second visit to her affiliated city of Belfast.

The destroyer berthed in the Titanic Quarter, with the massive cranes of Harland and Wolff serving as a dramatic backdrop, as she hosted local community leaders, the Lord Mayor of Belfast, the Lord Lieutenant and local sea cadet units.

Duncan's CO Cdr Charlie Guy said: "It's a proud moment for HMS Duncan and her ship's company to return to her affiliated city of Belfast.

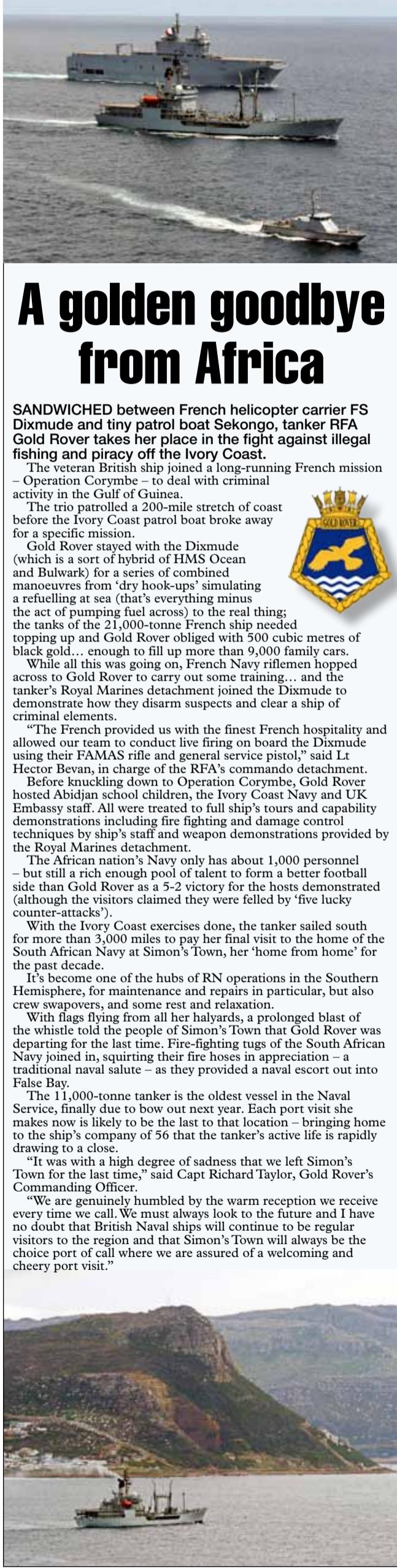
"It has been nearly three years since our last visit and to return in company and as part of a NATO task group that has been busy contributing to maritime security across Europe makes it even more special."

The warships also called in at HMNB Devonport, where they met the naval base commander and civic leaders before crew members took part in sporting challenges at HMS Drake.

The Standing NATO Maritime Groups provide NATO with a continuous maritime capability for operations and other activities in peacetime and in periods of crisis and conflict. They also help to establish Alliance presence, demonstrate solidarity, conduct routine diplomatic visits to different countries, support transformation and provide a variety of maritime military capabilities to on-going missions.

Pictures: LPhot Guy Pool, HMS Duncan





A golden goodbye from Africa

SANDWICHED between French helicopter carrier FS Dixmude and tiny patrol boat Sekongo, tanker RFA Gold Rover takes her place in the fight against illegal fishing and piracy off the Ivory Coast.

The veteran British ship joined a long-running French mission – Operation Corymbe – to deal with criminal activity in the Gulf of Guinea.

The trio patrolled a 200-mile stretch of coast before the Ivory Coast patrol boat broke away for a specific mission.

Gold Rover stayed with the Dixmude (which is a sort of hybrid of HMS Ocean and Bulwark) for a series of combined manoeuvres from ‘dry hook-ups’ simulating a refuelling at sea (that’s everything minus the act of pumping fuel across) to the real thing; the tanks of the 21,000-tonne French ship needed topping up and Gold Rover obliged with 500 cubic metres of black gold... enough to fill up more than 9,000 family cars.

While all this was going on, French Navy riflemen hopped across to Gold Rover to carry out some training... and the tanker’s Royal Marines detachment joined the Dixmude to demonstrate how they disarm suspects and clear a ship of criminal elements.

“The French provided us with the finest French hospitality and allowed our team to conduct live firing on board the Dixmude using their FAMAS rifle and general service pistol,” said Lt Hector Bevan, in charge of the RFA’s commando detachment.

Before knuckling down to Operation Corymbe, Gold Rover hosted Abidjan school children, the Ivory Coast Navy and UK Embassy staff. All were treated to full ship’s tours and capability demonstrations including fire fighting and damage control techniques by ship’s staff and weapon demonstrations provided by the Royal Marines detachment.

The African nation’s Navy only has about 1,000 personnel – but still a rich enough pool of talent to form a better football side than Gold Rover as a 5-2 victory for the hosts demonstrated (although the visitors claimed they were felled by ‘five lucky counter-attacks’).

With the Ivory Coast exercises done, the tanker sailed south for more than 3,000 miles to pay her final visit to the home of the South African Navy at Simon’s Town, her ‘home from home’ for the past decade.

It’s become one of the hubs of RN operations in the Southern Hemisphere, for maintenance and repairs in particular, but also crew swapovers, and some rest and relaxation.

With flags flying from all her halyards, a prolonged blast of the whistle told the people of Simon’s Town that Gold Rover was departing for the last time. Fire-fighting tugs of the South African Navy joined in, squirting their fire hoses in appreciation – a traditional naval salute – as they provided a naval escort out into False Bay.

The 11,000-tonne tanker is the oldest vessel in the Naval Service, finally due to bow out next year. Each port visit she makes now is likely to be the last to that location – bringing home to the ship’s company of 56 that the tanker’s active life is rapidly drawing to a close.

“It was with a high degree of sadness that we left Simon’s Town for the last time,” said Capt Richard Taylor, Gold Rover’s Commanding Officer.

“We are genuinely humbled by the warm reception we receive every time we call. We must always look to the future and I have no doubt that British Naval ships will continue to be regular visitors to the region and that Simon’s Town will always be the choice port of call where we are assured of a welcoming and cheery port visit.”



Where heroes once trekked...

THIS rugged and rather unforgiving shore is where Sir Ernest Shackleton found land after 16 days sailing the hostile southern ocean in his makeshift lifeboat, James Caird.

And this rugged and rather unforgiving shore is where a small party from today’s Antarctic explorer, HMS Protector, came ashore in a small, hi-tech, survey launch, James Caird IV, to remember the deeds of one of the nation’s greatest adventurers.

This is King Haakon Bay on the northwest coast of South Georgia, an eight-mile-long fjord which has changed little, if at all, since Shackleton and his party landed after their 800-mile journey from Elephant Island.

Even then, his rescue mission wasn’t over. He still had to cross 20 miles of unforgiving mountainous terrain to reach human habitation and the whaling station at Stromness, finally alerting the world to the plight

of his expedition; every man in his party trapped on Elephant Island was eventually saved.

Protector spent much of last Antarctic summer celebrating the deeds of one British polar hero, Robert Falcon Scott, concentrating her efforts in the Ross Sea – last visited by a Royal Navy vessel eight decades ago and the focal point for Capt Scott’s attempts to reach the South Pole.

In visiting Scott’s former haunts, Protector has also called at many of his arch rival’s; in the 12 months since the icebreaker/survey ship left her home of Devonport, she has visited almost all of the key locations associated with Shackleton’s polar expeditions: Lyttelton in New Zealand, his hut on the Ross Ice Shelf, the abandoned whaling stations of South Georgia and the Antarctic gateway port of Punta Arenas, Chile, where Shackleton and his men were ultimately

rescued with assistance from the Chilean Navy.

The last act of commemoration on South Georgia was a partial recreation of Shackleton’s trek across the island, a four-mile hike led by the ship’s Royal Marines detachment from Fortuna Bay to the whaling station at Stromness, long since abandoned.

“It was a privilege to be able to follow in the footsteps of Sir Ernest Shackleton – if only for a short distance,” said Mne Tom Colwill.

“The weather going over the ridge was amazing and we had fantastic views. Once we reached Stromness the fog closed in and we had a short taste of the conditions the original expedition may have experienced.”

Weapon engineer LET(WE) Andy Conway added: “This was an amazing day, probably one of the best of my career so far.”

With whaling long gone, South Georgia has been reborn as a remote nature haven and an increasingly-popular destination for eco-tourists; during the summer season (April-September) upwards of 10,000 people now visit the island.

As a result, the charts cruise liners use to negotiate its rocky waters need to be bang up to date, so Protector and her survey launches such as James Caird IV gathered the latest data on the seabed.

During Protector’s stint around South Georgia the Navy surveyors scanned 160 square miles of seabed – roughly the area of the Isle of Wight.

The reams of data collected will be fed to the UK Hydrographic Office in Taunton to allow it to update the charts used by the Royal Navy – and many of the world’s mariners.

Protector is now beginning her second austral summer surveying Antarctic waters and supporting scientific studies.

Pictures: LPhot Kyle Heller



First T26 to be laid down

THE first steel will be cut on the Navy's next-generation frigates next summer.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon has announced work will start on the hull of the first of eight Type 26 Global Combat Ships – as yet unnamed.

It begins a construction programme which will start to replace ageing Type 23 frigates (the oldest still under the White Ensign, HMS Argyll, is now 27 years old), securing shipbuilding jobs on the Clyde – and a nationwide supply and support chain – until around 2035.

Nearly £2bn has been spent to date on the Type 26 programme, from the design of the ships to acquiring parts and systems for the first three warships in the class; more than two dozen firms are already involved, manufacturing the air weapons handling systems, gas turbines, and electric propulsion motor and drive systems.

BAE is also under contract to manufacture the Maritime Indirect Fire System, including its 5in Mk 45 gun.

During a visit to BAE's Govan yard, Mr Fallon also announced a £100m contract with defence firm MBDA to deliver the Sea Ceptor air defence missile; it is currently being fitted to Type 23s as a replacement for the veteran Seawolf and will be the first line of defence for Type 26s against air attack.

And the Defence Secretary and BAE also said a contract would soon be finalised for the two extra Offshore Patrol Vessels in addition to HM Ships Forth, Medway and Trent which are in various stages of construction on the Clyde.

Ships four and five will be built and handed over to the RN by 2019 – before work on the Type 26s is in full swing.

Further down the line will come five general-purpose frigates, the Type 31s, which will not be as 'high spec' as the 26s.

Trafficking mission done

HOME safely in Portsmouth after a two-month mission to strangle arms trafficking in the central Mediterranean is Her Majesty's Ship Diamond.

The Type 45 destroyer was dispatched to the region at the end of August to support both a UN Security Council Resolution and the EU Naval Force committed to preventing weapons reaching Libya by sea.

Diamond carried out surveillance of shipping off Libya, while her mixed Royal Marines-Royal Navy boarding team carried out a small number of searches of vessels, looking for weapons and ammunition, while her Wildcat helicopter provided cover overhead. No arms were found during her spell on patrol.

The destroyer plugged the gap left briefly by RFA Mounts Bay which was undergoing maintenance in Gibraltar and has now resumed the mission.

"Diamond has made an important contribution to the effort in the Mediterranean," said the destroyer's CO Cdr Marcus Hember.

"It is important that we not only contribute to the efforts to help the people of Libya, but that we also try to address the root causes of these problems."

"We have certainly contributed to that effort in our time here, dramatically improving our understanding of maritime activity in the region."

operation by the Royal Navy, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and US Coast Guard in waters between Venezuela and Puerto Rico.

A Royal Marines sniper in the back of a Lynx helicopter from 815 Naval Air Squadron first fired warning shots ahead of the go-fast calling on the traffickers to stop and then, when ignored those shots took out the speedboat's engines bringing it to a halt.

A specialist team of US

Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment then boarded the suspect craft and recovered 14 bales of what they believed were illegal narcotics; subsequent tests revealed it to be 350kg cocaine with a wholesale value on the streets of \$11.6m – more than £9m in the UK.

Before the boarding team reached the vessel, the crew were observed ditching several bales overboard – it's thought 650kg of cocaine worth around £17m was discarded, while the go-fast itself subsequently sank.

The successful bust was sparked by a maritime patrol aircraft sighting the go-fast and directing RFA Wave Knight to intercept. She responded by bearing down on the speedboat – and launching her helicopter,

which no boat could outrun.

The tanker, based in Portland in Dorset, is assigned to Operation Martillo, the international drugs-busting effort across the Caribbean.

The five crew of the go-fast plus the haul of drugs were later transferred to the US Coast Guard cutter Richard Etheridge and handed over to authorities in Miami Beach.

"This seizure highlights how effectively the US Coast Guard and our Allied partners are working together to disrupt and dismantle the criminal networks that depend on the flow of illicit drugs from South America into the United States, the Caribbean, and Europe," said Capt Nigel Budd RFA, Wave Knight's Commanding Officer..

New rescue training site for deeps

A PURPOSE-built new submarine escape training complex will open for deeps in Faslane in 2018 as the base becomes the home of the Silent Service.

Defence firm Babcock has been awarded a contract to deliver submarine escape, rescue, abandonment and survival training (known in the Service as SMERAS) to crews.

For decades – and long after operational boats left the Hampshire port – submarine rescue training has been concentrated in Gosport, whose waterfront is still dominated by the iconic escape tank.

With all boats – hunter killers and deterrent submarines – based in or in the process of being moved to the Clyde, state-of-the-art, class-specific escape towers/compartments will be built in Faslane.

In addition, the new complex will feature classrooms with computer systems which cover all elements of escape, rescue, abandonment and survival training, new office facilities, workshops and changing areas.

A standalone instructor-led live environment training pool will also be added, capable of replicating the environmental conditions in which submarine escapes may have to take place.

The combination of 'dry' and 'wet' training, says Babcock, will give submariners "the chance to experience 'real-world' situations, without the need to use 'pressurised' environments."



In the line of fire

MORE than a dozen rounds of precisely-aimed sniper fire across the bow of a go-fast speedboat as a dramatic six-hour chase across the Caribbean reaches its climax – and more than £26m of cocaine never reaches its destination.

Fourteen bales of illegal drugs were captured in a combined



Second phase of Bahrain base open

SO I said: "Middleton. That name rings a bell..."

Aboard the minehunter which shares its name with his daughter-in-law's family, Prince Charles jokes with sailors maintaining the RN's permanent mine warfare presence in the Gulf.

The heir to the throne clambered aboard the Hunt-class ship as part of a formal visit to the RN's Middle East HQ in Bahrain.

It is from the kingdom that the UK Maritime Component Command directs the operations of well over 1,000 sailors, Royal Marines, RFA and FAA personnel – responsible for a dozen warships, support vessels, air squadrons and specialist units – on a daily basis.

Such is the RN's commitment to the Gulf and the small kingdom that the King of Bahrain has donated land at Mina Salman port to provide the first RN shore base east of Suez in 45 years.

A warehouse facility is already in use and ready now is the welfare building which was jointly opened by Prince Charles and the Crown Prince of Bahrain.

The newly-finished block features a galley for nearly 250 people, classrooms, gym, and multi-faith prayer room, plus accommodation for Bahrain-based Brits.

One of those sailors itching to use the new facilities is Middleton's AB(MW) Gareth Miles, who said the chance to chat with Prince Charles had been "the highlight of my deployment."

The 31-year-old continued: "The new facilities being built here will make a huge difference to our quality of life out here in the Gulf."

Closer ties with US and Japan

THE leaders of three of the world's most powerful navies put pen to paper to pledge even closer co-operation.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones met his counterparts from the US Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force at the Pentagon in Washington to cement increased collaboration and co-operation.

The First Sea Lord, US Chief

of Naval Operations Admiral John Richardson and Chief of Staff of the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force Admiral Tomohisa Takei all agree there is room for more joint activity.

They committed to greater co-operation during exercises and an increase in combined patrols, with specific activities to be worked out in follow-on discussions.



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Hello, last Wildcat...

THIS is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.

This is the very last of 28 Wildcat helicopters (yours for about £27m) to be delivered to the Fleet Air Arm, flown the short distance from its assembly works to its home for the next quarter of a century.

Just over a decade after the order for the successor with the Lynx – both naval and battlefield – was placed with AgustaWestland (recently renamed Leonardo), ZZ530 rolled off the production line ready for use with 825 NAS.

Helping deliver the aircraft from Yeovil to Yeovilton was Leonardo's flight test engineer John Doherty, who was marshalled on to the standings at the Somerset air station by his 25-year-old son, AET Sam Doherty, who works as a technician maintaining Wildcats.

"I have met some of the fantastic young Royal Navy Engineers and aircrew – what I call the 'PlayStation generation' who can appreciate the new systems on the Wildcat and will really be able make it sing," said Mr Doherty.

"I hope all the development work that I have put in over the years has produced something that they can also feel proud of. I flew on the first Wildcat flight on ZZ400 in November 2009 and now I have delivered the last."

Accepting the new helicopter on behalf of the Fleet Air Arm was 825's CO Cdr Simon Collins – the 15th of 28 Navy Wildcats to be handed over to his care.

"I've seen the Wildcat force grow from its infancy to the capable and highly effective unit it has become today, with Wildcat flights already currently deployed across the globe," he said.

"This day marks the end of one chapter of the Wildcat story, and the beginning of the next which will undoubtedly be a long and illustrious career at the forefront of future naval aviation operations."

When the Lynx retires from service after nearly 40 years in March, 815 NAS will assume responsibility for providing frigates and destroyers with Wildcat flights while 825 NAS will act as the training and development unit for the helicopter and its air and ground crews.

...Hello, first Merlin

YOU'VE never seen a Merlin like this before.

This is the Royal Marines' flying steed of tomorrow, the fourth incarnation of a battle-proven helicopter – and the one best suited to both commando operations and flying at sea.

The very first Mk4 took to Somerset skies last month after technicians and engineers at Leonardo – previously Agusta-Westland – in Yeovil completed turning a battlefield Mk3 into a battlefield Mk4.

The difference?

Well, for a start it's maritime grey not battlefield green (although it's easily distinguishable from its submarine-hunting Mk2 sisters by the lack of a radar dome under the cockpit).

Less obvious to the eye is a folding main rotor head and folding tail which make it much more suited to operating from RN carriers and assault ships at sea.

In addition, inside the crew of four have access to a vastly-improved avionics suite.

The first Mk4 is likely to be ready for front-line operations by late 2017, with the entire fleet of 25 converted by 2020.

Watching the Mk4's maiden flight was Col Lenny Brown, the Royal Marine in charge of CHF – who can't wait for his men and women to get their hands on the upgraded helicopter.

"What a fantastic achievement for Leonardo, the Merlin project team and all those involved at Commando Helicopter Force," he said.

"This is truly a leap forward in CHF's capability to support 3 Commando Brigade at the speed and range required on the modern battlefield, whether operating embarked in Royal Navy warships or on land."

Picture: Leonardo



Mine games

IF ONLY all mines were so helpfully labelled... A diver from HMS Middleton approaches a practice mine during the biggest test of UK-US minehunting forces in the Gulf this autumn.

All five of the UK's mine warfare vessels based in Bahrain put to sea: HM Ships Bangor, Penzance, Middleton and Chiddingfold, plus RFA Lyme Bay which serves as a command/supply/depot ship for British and Allied minehunters.

The Americans maintain a permanent force in Bahrain too, ready to respond should anyone try to mine the three main 'choke points' for shipping in the region – Suez, the Strait of Hormuz, gateway to the Gulf, and the Bab el Mandeb at the foot of the Red Sea – particularly as two fifths of the world energy needs are met by the natural reserves of the Gulf.

The US Navy committed three of its minehunters to Exercise 17-1 (yes, we know it's still 2016...): USS Devastator, Gladiator and Dextrous, which are similar to our Hunts in ability (even down to the Seafox submersibles used by both to detect and destroy mines), but considerably larger and fitted with wooden decks.

They also detached a unit of giant MH53 Sea Dragon helicopters (seven tonnes heavier and 20ft longer than Royal Navy Merlins), unique in the western world as 'flying minesweepers'; they can trail a cutting wire through the ocean to cut mines from their tethers. Unmanned systems – such as REMUS, the seabed scanner, and Seafox – were all in action, as were traditional ordnance clearance divers as the Brits and Americans neutralised a simulated minefield.

"The exercise was a great opportunity to

prove our minehunting skills – and for me it has been both interesting and challenging as I got my first chance to dive on a buoyant mine," said AB(D) Daniel Mulholland of HMS Middleton.

His ship specialises in clearing shallower waters of mines. To discover those lurking further below requires a Sandown-class with a detachable sonar, like HMS Penzance.

Her CO Lt Cdr Neil Griffiths found the three-week exercise "an enjoyable and challenging period for my team in what are the most challenging environmental conditions for a mine counter-measures vessel. Working in close proximity to one another alongside our sister ships and allies builds on our confidence and experience, allowing us to reassure the maritime community in this region."

The exercise was planned and directed by the UK mine warfare force commander, Cdr David Morgan, and his battle staff, who were aboard RFA Lyme Bay throughout.

Despite the common aim and some common equipment, the two navies still need to run regular combined exercises to ensure the sum is greater than the individual parts.

"My overall objective is to enhance surface and underwater mine hunting proficiency using various assets from the Royal and US Navies," Cdr Morgan explained.

"17-1 is one of several annual joint exercises which allow the coalition forces stationed in the Gulf to hone our skills and be able to respond to any mine threats."

"By continually training together the MCM component of the Combined Maritime Forces can help to safeguard the free flow of commerce in and out of the Gulf."

Axe to fall on sites across RN/RM estate

CONCENTRATING almost the entire Corps in and around Plymouth and all-but ending Gosport's centuries-long association with the Royal Navy are the headline changes in the biggest shake-up of the MOD's bases and estates in decades.

A rash of RM units and establishments are being closed with almost all of them rehoused in new buildings either at HMS Raleigh or Devonport Naval Base.

And HMS Sultan – home of all mechanical and air engineering for the Fleet and Fleet Air Arm and around 3,000 military and civilian personnel on a daily basis – will be sold off within a decade, reducing the RN presence in the town to just the Institute of Naval Medicine.

Whitehall reckons the mass sell-off of sites – mostly for housing – and the concentration of similar units in certain areas will save the taxpayer £140m over the next decade and upwards of £3bn by 2040.

At the same time, the MOD promises to spend £4bn on its facilities over the coming ten years.

Earmarked for closure

Royal Marines sites

- RM Condor airfield, Arbroath, sold by 2020
- RM Stonehouse, sold by 2023; 3 Commando Brigade/30 Commando IX Group will be relocated in Devonport Naval Base/Raleigh
- Citadel, Plymouth, sold by 2023; 29 Commando Regiment RA will be relocated in Devonport Naval Base/Raleigh
- RM Chivenor, north Devon, sold by 2027; CLR and 24 Engineer Regiment RE will be relocated in Devonport Naval Base/Raleigh
- RM Norton Manor, Taunton, sold by 2028; 40 Commando will be relocated in Devonport Naval Base/Raleigh

Ahead of the review, the MOD owned nearly two per cent of land in the UK, but much of it was under-used and its infrastructure often over 50 years old; the size, scale and age of the facilities costs the Government around £2.5bn every year.

That, said Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon, had to change – especially as the Armed Forces had shrunk by one third.

Royal Navy sites

- HMS Sultan, Gosport, sold by 2026; marine engineering to Collingwood (Surface Fleet) and Faslane (Submarine Service); AIB to Portsmouth Naval Base

MOD sites

- Southwick Park (former HMS Dryad), sold by 2025; Defence School of Policing to move to Worthy Down
- Fort Blockhouse, Gosport (former HMS Dolphin), sold by 2020
- MOD Caledonia, Rosyth, sold by 2022; role to be met by MOD facilities in Edinburgh

"We have been spending billions maintaining a defence estate that doesn't meet the needs of our Armed Forces," he told fellow MPs.

The MOD's new plan – A Better Defence Estate – would result in "an estate fit for our forces and their families", providing better facilities for training and delivering more stability for military families.

Divers deal with detritus

NAVAL bomb disposal experts spent a week clearing a battered Scottish range of unexploded ordnance.

Cape Wrath at the northwesternmost tip of mainland Britain and neighbouring Garvie island, 350 yards offshore, are subjected to poundings from naval guns and fast jets on bombing raids.

With the 2016 hammerings over – the second Joint Warrior exercise finished in mid-October – a 15-strong team of clearance divers from Faslane's Northern Diving Group made the six-hour journey to Sutherland to deal with any of the shells and bombs which should have exploded... but didn't... and render them safe.

This year the team, headed by NDG chief-of-staff Lt Cdr 'Castro' Castrinoyannakis and PO(D) Gerry Mulholland, carried out 98 dives in the waters surrounding Garvie Island.

Battling strong tides and chilly conditions, this year the team successfully destroyed one 500lb bomb and two 1,000lb 'crowdpleasers'.

The divers not only searched the seabed around Garvie Island, but also the ranges on land (which cover 107 square miles, or an area the size of Edinburgh).

They discovered a large haul of 4.5in high explosive shells, along with several mortars and 105mm smoke markers.

Among the team rendering these pieces of ammo safe was newly-qualified diver AB Deri Gittings.

He neutralised an 81mm mortar round which had failed to properly detonate by attaching a small explosive charge, which was then set off from a safe distance.

"I've only been on the team for a few weeks now and it is really rewarding to come here and practice all that I've learned in training," said Deri.

"While my experience on the initial clearance diver course was enjoyable – and intense at times, of course – working operationally was a whole new level. To work with such a professional bunch of lads was fantastic."

500lb bomb blown up

ROYAL Navy bomb disposal experts destroyed a German 500lb bomb found in Portsmouth Harbour.

The WW2 device was found by a barge dredging the harbour ahead of the arrival next spring of HMS Queen Elizabeth – the Royal Navy's new 65,000-tonne aircraft carrier.

The bomb was towed out to open waters 1.5 miles east of the Isle of Wight where a controlled explosion took place. Harbour movements were restricted while the device was towed out through the harbour entrance.

Captain of Portsmouth Naval Base, Capt Bill Oliphant, said: "This is the third piece of historic ordnance found in the harbour during the dredging works since September."

"We worked closely with Hampshire Police and Portsmouth City Council to ensure we dealt with this incident in the safest way possible, at the same time causing least disruption to the city."

Cdr Del McKnight, in charge of the bomb disposal team involved in the operation, said: "Everything went smoothly and we were pleased to be able to get the operation completed in daylight."

"Despite being old, these devices still pose a very serious threat when they are moved."

Sharpening up Sabre...

HMS SABRE has been hauled out of the Med for five weeks for her annual survey/refit.

The work carried out on the 23-year-old boat included repainting and cleaning of the hull to improve her speed through the water (sadly the shark's teeth once painted on her bow have long since gone) and an overhaul of her two MAN V10 diesel engines which power the 24-tonne boat through territorial waters (and occasionally beyond) at speeds of up to 32kts (36mph).

The overhaul usually takes six weeks, but thanks to the skill and depth of experience of local firm Bolaños and the engineers of the RN Gibraltar Squadron, they finished a week early.

While she was out of the water, sister HMS Scimitar was patrolling around Gib (plus the squadron's RIBs, and civilian police craft) and escorting visiting British and Allied warships – including HMS Daring, Diamond and Bulwark – into and out of the naval base.

...and setting a new Example

ALSO back in the water after being out of action for 12 months is HMS Example.

The P2000, which serves Northumbrian Universities Royal Naval Unit, is now on the Tyne at HMS Calliope having gone through a mast-to-keel, bow-to-stern overhaul, including replacing her engines; the 54-tonne boat should be able to reach speeds of 22kts.

Students/cadets were given a chance to familiarise themselves with the souped-up patrol boat with a sea day at the beginning of the new academic year.

Second charity for HMS QE

The charity which keeps the legends of the Fleet Air Arm airborne has become the second good cause formally linked with the nation's new aircraft carrier.

The Fly Navy Heritage Trust, which helps fund the RN Historic Flight at RNAS Yeovilton, was named as the second benefactor of fund-raising activities by the crew of HMS Queen Elizabeth, which is already bound with the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

The charity, which owns the last flying de Havilland Sea Vixen in the world and a Hawker Sea Fury T20, is planning to fly a collection of historic naval aircraft over HMS Queen Elizabeth when she enters Portsmouth for the first time next year.

Argus makes a MASF difference to training

LA(AH) AARON Eynon watches a Jungle Merlin prepare to touch down on the deck of RFA Argus as the support ship resumes her aviation training role.

Out of action for a major overhaul following her six-month mission to Sierra Leone in 2014-15, when vital aid and equipment was flown from her deck to medical stations and remote hospitals trying to deal with the Ebola outbreak, Argus is resuming her training duties.

The revamp in Falmouth was completed back in the summer, since when Argus has been gradually working her way back to front-line fitness, either as the Navy's floating medical facility or aviation training ship (assisted by 50 personnel from the Maritime Aviation Support Force, or MASF, based at Culdrose).

To perform the latter role, she must be able to cope with



more than one type of helicopter operating from her flight deck simultaneously.

Enter Jungles from Yeovilton and Dauphins used by FOST for multi-spot/multi-aircraft validation as Argus came to the end of Operational Sea Training.

"Argus is now fully operational and we have resumed one of our primary roles as an aviation training ship," said Capt Karl Woodfield.

His ship is closing out 2016 off the South Coast to allow air and ground crews to learn – and re-learn – the art of operating from a moving deck at sea by day and night.

At the same time, the veteran auxiliary remains at five days' notice to deploy anywhere in the world.

Picture: Lee Howard



Wave Knight's TEMA effort in the Indies

FRESH from their success stopping £40m drugs reach the UK (see page 5), the crew of naval tanker RFA Wave Knight helped islanders on Tobago cope after being lashed by 110 mph winds.

Her Lynx helicopter flew emergency supplies and medical stores to the village of Charlottesville, which bore the brunt of the Category 3 hurricane.

The helicopter winchman was lowered to deliver the medical supplies, whilst engineers carried out repairs to the fast rescue craft used by the Tobago Emergency Management Agency (TEMA).

Thankfully, the hurricane was not real – this was a test both of the island's emergency facilities and the small, specialist Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief team aboard the tanker.

The Brits found the island's authorities very much prepared for a disaster: a database of everyone known to have special medical requirements is held, for example, and there were live feeds from across the island coming into the operations room – and live feeds going back out showing what was being done to help islanders.

As well as simulated assistance for Tobagonians, there was genuine help in the form of three community projects for the HADR troops to get stuck into.

Parts of the Olive Sawyer Day Care Centre needed painting in keeping with the sky-blue colour scheme of the main building, which the team completed in under a day, then they swept aside reeds up to 8ft tall ("it needed some serious weed whacking") in the back

garden.

An old armoury at Roxborough Secondary School on the opposite side of the island was next to benefit from the HADR troops' selflessness. A store for deactivated Lee Enfield rifles used by the school's naval cadets needed painting and some new racks to hold extra guns.

And just for good measure, Joshua Boys Home on Trinidad also needed a spruce-up when the tanker made the short trip to the neighbouring island.

Despite only housing 12 youngsters, the orphanage still required two days of hard graft to paint both the building and surrounding wall in the grounds – even with the help of the boys who, brushes in hand, were supervised as they added some colour to the wall.

Latest Naval operational honours

MORE THAN 30 Naval Service personnel have received honours and awards in the latest Operational Honours list.

They are: OBE – Cdr DS Knight and Surg Cdr MJ Turner (see page 31).

MBE – Cdr NP Foster, Lt Cdr VH Percival and C/Sgt LS Shepherd.

Associate of the Royal Red Cross 2nd Class – CPONN J Mason.

Air Force Cross – Lt Cdr RA Lightfoot.

Queen's Gallantry Medal – POA AP Speed

OCVS – CPO(WS) (Sonar SM) C Byne, Maj S Cotton, Cpl CA Kingsley, CPOET(MESM) R Lilley, Lt S Lynch RNR and Lt Cdr MT Malone

Joint Commander's Commendations: LT CE Cooper, Lt RM Cullingford, CPOET(ME) S Domville, WO1 JD Donbavand, WO2 R McCormick, Cpl EW Nel

Fleet Commander's Commendations: CPOAE(AV) T Andrews, Lt Cdr JW Betchley, ET(CIISM) DP Blackburn, LLog(Ch) CC Boyne, Sgt D Brodowicz, Lt Cdr DR Carter, CPOET(WESM) GJ Curnow, C/O(X) DJ Grace RFA, L/Cpl JST Herbert, Lt Cdr S Iville, Cdr HW Kapma, WO1ET(ME) AE Mackay, Capt RJ Mawdsley, WO1MEM(M) WN Middleton, AB(D) J Osborne, Lt Cdr AN Petch, WO2ET(MESM) DJ Pinney, WO1Log(SC) JM Prece, Sapper DR Roy RE, CPOET(MESM) DC Smith, POLOG(SC) TJ Smith, Lt Cdr CAP Thomas-Hoeflitz, Cdr MS Tonge, CPOET(ME) NP Wells and LET(ME) DR Young.

Fleet Commander's Team Commendations: Casing party, HMS Ambush and Marine Engineering Department, HMS Daring

Four days in the capital for Severn

HMS Severn berthed alongside HMS Belfast following a seven-hour journey up the Thames for a four-day visit to London.

Onboard were members of the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals, who successfully bid for the trip as part of a charity auction, the money going to a charity which supports terminally-ill children visiting Disneyland Paris.

"It was a true privilege to sail up the River Thames as Officer of the Watch, especially on my final day onboard Severn," said gunnery officer Lt Matt Smith.

During her stay the River-class ship hosted a number of guests, including the Deputy Naval Regional Commander, the Mayor of Southwick and Twickenham Sea Cadets.

Severn is now back continuing her duties with the Fishery Protection Squadron.

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● The 10.5cm flak guns as they appeared mounted on the wreck of the Graf Spee as photographed by British 'salvage' experts and (right) the only known images of the barrels and their mountings, taken for reasons unknown in Devonport in July 1942

Pictures: US Naval History and Heritage Command and Devonport Heritage Centre

The curious story of the lost guns of the Graf Spee

DID you hear the one about the gun salvaged from a German battleship in a secret South American spy mission, shipped back to Plymouth running the U-boat gauntlet and accidentally scrapped by dockyard workers?

If you're waiting for a punchline, there isn't one. It's an astonishing true story unearthed by historian/author/FOST employee and former senior rating Dave Smith which began with four photographs unearthed after more than 70 years in the archives at Devonport.

With nothing more than the label 'Graf Spee' fixed to black and white prints of two barrels and several mountings recorded for reasons unknown in July 1942, Dave began digging around in the archives. The story he eventually pieced together is a mix of Alastair McLean and John le Carré.

The beginnings are simple enough and well known. Damaged by three British cruisers at the River Plate, the marauding German 'pocket battleship' Graf Spee sought refuge – and time for repairs – in the Uruguayan port of Montevideo.

When permission was refused, the battered ship sailed about four miles, then was scuttled (*pictured below*) in full view of a crowd 20,000 strong.

And this is where the intrigue begins.

Although the skeleton crew had done a very thorough job of scuttling Graf Spee, the Admiralty was convinced the charred, contorted hull still contained many secrets.

Using a shadowy Uruguayan intermediary, says Dave, the British government bought Graf Spee for the princely sum of £14,000 (about £4.5m today), then dispatched one of the country's leading radar experts to South America.

Throughout her clash with the Ajax, Exeter and Achilles, Graf Spee's gunnery had been remarkably good – prompting suspicions her 11in guns had been assisted by radar, a good year ahead of the RN.

Despite nearly four months of exposure to the South Atlantic and the Germans' best efforts to wreck everything of value, the wonderfully-named radar expert Labouchere Bainbridge-Bell clambered on board, collected the requisite evidence (Graf Spee was indeed equipped with gun-control radar) and, together with sketches, diagrams and photographs, returned to the UK, much to the delight of Naval intelligence.

Delighted with Bainbridge-Bell's haul, the Admiralty wanted more of Graf Spee's secrets and drew up a shopping list: armour plating, instruments, samples of welding, any instrumentation still intact and, above all, the pocket battleship's armament – 4cm guns, one of the twin 10.5cm anti-aircraft guns, a 15cm gun, even one of the barrels of the

main 28cm/11in guns.

Time and tide were against the salvage effort. By mid-to-late April 1940, Graf Spee was increasingly disappearing beneath the waves – one of the flak guns was already submerged. Another, knocked out by shells from HMS Exeter, was within reach of salvagers who carefully began to dismantle the 20-tonne weapon, recording every detail on camera, before putting the parts into crates for onward transport to the UK.

Even then, there was no guarantee the prize would reach its destination once loaded aboard the steamer Princesa.

"The convoy had to cross the dangerous expanse of the Atlantic – a prolific hunting ground for U-boats," says Dave. "Two vessels in the convoy, SL34, were sunk by U-46."

After a six-week journey, the Princesa arrived in Devonport to offload her secret cargo.

There the gun – which fired 105mm (4.1in) rounds (that's the same as today's field artillery used by the Royal Marines) was pored over by naval architects and intelligence experts who were keen to learn about the thickness of its armour plating and internal workings.

From their study of Graf Spee, the Admiralty decided the pocket battleship – effectively a cruiser with the guns of a battleship – wasn't a class of ship the Royal Navy should ever consider building.

As for the largely-dismantled anti-aircraft gun, it eventually ended up on a jetty by Dry Dock No.8 – where these photographs were taken. "They are probably the only remaining record which prove that a gun from the Graf Spee was actually landed on British soil," says Dave.

The barrels and some of their mountings stayed in the same place for perhaps 30 years. By then the wartime generation of dockyard workers had mostly retired and few knew the story behind the gun – so it was almost certainly cut up and sold as scrap.

"Had the historic importance of the weapon been identified earlier, it probably wouldn't have suffered such an end," Dave believes.

For the historian, delving into the world of espionage, furtive salvage missions and German battle-cruisers has been a marked change from his normal area of expertise: wartime submarine operations.

Writing under the pen name David J B Smith, he's published a critically-acclaimed account of submarine HMS Unbeaten's role in WW2 (*Being Silent They Speak*) and is now looking into the full story of the huge French 'submarine cruiser' Surcouf (it carried a seaplane and a twin 8in gun) which vanished in February 1942 making use of documents trawled from archives all over the world.



Sprinklers to save Victory

HMS Victory should never suffer the fate which befell the Cutty Sark after a unique sprinkler system was installed aboard Nelson's flagship.

Victory is in the middle of one of the most comprehensive revamps in her 250-year life.

But when the Cutty Sark went through a similar overhaul a decade ago, she was ravaged by fire which set her restoration back several years – and cost upwards of £10m.

In addition to the problems posed by Victory's wooden – and hence very flammable – construction, any system to suppress a fire must be relatively unobtrusive (you don't want to ruin the feel of an 18th Century warship) and be able to put out a blaze without causing too much damage to the priceless artefacts and weapons on board.

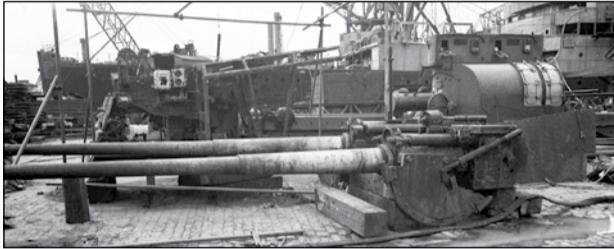
The flow of air through the ship and its gun ports would cause water droplets to be blown away if the usual method of spraying mist was used.

So Victory's conservationists and experts at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service came up with a bespoke sprinkler system for the man o'war: it spews different-sized water droplets on different decks, with the larger, heavier droplets being more resistant to the wind.

The pipework and sprinkler heads were positioned with painstaking care to avoid spoiling the character of the vessel.

"The best I can say about the fire protection system is that I don't notice it – which is the most important thing," said Andrew Baines, Head of Historic Ships at the National Museum of the RN.

"I sleep easier in my bed knowing this system has been installed. Victory came to us having survived for centuries. It is our job to ensure she lasts for another 250 years plus."



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A RCTIC convoyman Jack Thomas, 92, watched with emotion as the Swordfish circled gracefully over the sleek destroyer in Liverpool's cruise liner terminal and flew low enough for him to read its number.

"That's my Swordfish," he cried as he recognised W5856 – the very same aircraft he flew in World War 2.

The legendary torpedo bomber bathed in the autumn sun as it flew along Liverpool's iconic waterfront; Mr Thomas and his band of Russian convoy veterans basked in the adulation of one of the nation's great port cities, happy to host three days of events marking the 75th anniversary of the beginning of the Arctic Convoys.

Now beautifully maintained by the RN Historic Flight, Mr Thomas's old plane was among the veterans who made the pilgrimage to Liverpool, where the city was putting on a series of events to honour the WW2 veterans.

The Swordfish and its pilot, Cdr Chris Götke, had travelled up the day before, making the 150-mile journey from RNAS Yeovilton at about 90 miles an hour.

Mr Thomas had made a short journey over the water from Wirral. But many of the 34 veterans who travelled to Liverpool, all now in their late 80s and 90s, had come from much further afield for the commemorations.

As for the citizens of Liverpool, they turned out in force to honour the veterans over a weekend of events – probably the last large-scale celebration of those who made the terrible journey to northern Russia between 1941 and 1945 – organised by the Royal Navy, Royal British Legion and Liverpool City Council.

The Royal Navy sent the Massed Bands of the Royal Marines and HMS Dragon to support the commemorations.

The ship was a particularly happy choice for the 'golden thread' of history, as her wartime namesake, a Royal Navy cruiser, was commissioned into the Polish Navy in 1943 for convoy escort duties from Liverpool.

The Type 45 destroyer, with the splendid red Welsh dragons on her bow, attracted massive interest, hosting more than 1,800 visitors in a single morning.

A concert by the Massed Bands of the Royal Marines at the Philharmonic Hall – their first in the city in 15 years – on the Saturday night in aid of the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity was a complete sell-out.

The programme had a strong theme of remembrance, with the first performance in the city of *Remembering Jutland*, a piece of music and film specially commissioned to mark the centenary of the Great War battle.

The Portsmouth and Collingwood bands joined forces for the concert, with the conducting shared among their musical directors, Maj Jon Ridley (Collingwood), Capt Ian Davis (Portsmouth) and Lt Col Nick Grace, the UK's Senior Military Musician and the Royal Marines Principal Director of Music.

Journalist and broadcaster John Suchet, compère for the evening, said he thrilled to be working with the bands again. "They are not just some of the finest musicians in the Armed Forces, but in the country," he said.

The bandies were joined by Liverpool mezzo-soprano Danielle Louise Thomas, 'Liverpool's Singer in Residence,' who sang in the Battle of the Atlantic 70th anniversary commemorations concert with the Portsmouth band in 2013.

Cdre Gary Doyle, Naval Regional Commander for Northern England and the Isle of Man, told the full house he was honoured to be representing the Royal Navy in a city with a great tradition of Royal Navy and Merchant Navy service, and he was delighted that HMS Prince of Wales would be affiliated to the city.

On Monday the veterans gathered in the magnificent setting of Liverpool Town Hall with guests including the Russian Ambassador and Earl Howe to hear the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Philip Jones, pay tribute to their wartime service.

Admiral Jones, who was born and brought up in Merseyside, told the assembled guests: "There is no headstone among the flowers for those who perish at sea, but today we remember the personal commitment, courage and sacrifice of every one of them."

The Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Cllr Roz Gladden, was moved to tears when Admiral Jones made a surprise presentation of her late father's Arctic Star emblem.

The First Sea Lord told the veterans: "The modern Navy is not as large as the Navy you knew, but we have not forgotten the lessons of the past.

"My solemn promise to you today is that the Royal Navy will honour your Service, and the sacrifice of so many more like you, by continuing to approach our duties with the same sense of responsibility and commitment that you showed in the icy water of the Arctic all those years ago."

The first of the Arctic Convoys sailed from Liverpool to Archangel in August 1941.

The ships faced not only enemy aircraft, surface ships, U-boats and mines but the icy weather, treacherous waters and perpetual darkness of the Arctic Circle in what Churchill came to describe as 'the worst journey in the world'.

One in every 20 ships sent to Russia was lost – compared with an average of one in 300 on other convoy routes during WW2 – and more than 3,000 Servicemen and merchant sailors were killed.

But they succeeded in delivering between 3.5 and 4 million tonnes of cargo of all kinds, from thousands of tanks and aircraft to vital fuel and machinery to the Soviet Union.

After the formal lunch the veterans gathered in Exchange Flags behind the Town Hall to hear the Royal Marines Scotland Band Beat Retreat, at which the Lord Lieutenant took the salute.

Then the party made its way to the Liverpool Cruise Liner Terminal to visit HMS Dragon. Some of the veterans were helped up the gangway by the young sailors, those in wheelchairs stayed on the quayside in brilliant sunshine to admire the ship and wait for the Swordfish flypast.

Two of the 'young Dragons,' AB Writer Lee Campbell, from Chirnside, south of Edinburgh, and ET Christian Clark, a weapons engineer from Wirral, were invited to the lunch to meet the veterans, and afterwards helped to show them around the ship.

"I think it's been brilliant," said 25-year-old Lee. "All the veterans have been smiling, but some had tears in their eyes too."

He added: "We can't experience what they went through as it hasn't happened to us, and while I wouldn't personally like to experience it, it would be good for us to see what it was like."

Reg Bywell, president of the Knowle branch of the RNA, had travelled from his home in Solihull for the commemorations. Liverpool was the city of his birth and he joined up in 1942 after working in a bank, volunteering for the Royal Navy and spending his early naval years looking after the radar in Swordfish aircraft. He said: "It's been a very good weekend, full of memories, and we had a warm welcome from the city."

The feelings of many of the veterans were summed up by Jack Thomas, who told one of the young sailors from HMS Dragon: "People ask me if I was scared, but when you're 18 or 19 you think you're immortal and you don't think of fear – it's your job."

He added: "We had times of great fear and times of great hilarity as well."

Pictures: PO(Phot) Owen Cooban, DDC



The final salute



Pictured at anchor early in 1917, this is one of the unsung workhorses of the Great War fleet.

HMS Marvel was an unremarkable ship – one of a class of more than 80 ‘M’ class destroyers built to meet wartime demands. Unremarkable except for its deeds and for levels of seamanship one terrible winter’s day just before Christmas 1916.

Our monthly rummage through the Imperial War Museum’s photographic database takes us to the end of 1916, a year which had offered so much for the Allied cause yet delivered so little beyond death and disappointment.

The bleeding of Britain’s new army on the Somme had been a victory – earned at far higher cost than either the public or generals predicted.

The French had just

recaptured Verdun but at a terrible price; their army would never be the same for the remainder of the war.

At least Britain could rely on her Navy to deliver. But no, Jutland like every other battle fought by land and sea in this Great War, was a muddled affair. It certainly wasn’t the second Trafalgar so long anticipated.

Nor was it the Grand Fleet’s last action of the 1914-18 war. It retreated to the safety of its natural harbour at Scapa Flow in the aftermath – and from there remained ready to pounce should the Germans emerge from the North Sea bases.

Sorties by the High Seas Fleet since ‘victory’ at Jutland had become even more spasmodic, with only one determined – and abortive – effort to attack the Royal Navy

en masse since May 31.

Scapa, bleak and barren at the height of summer, was especially depressing in the depths of winter; with the shortest day approaching, the men of the Grand Fleet could expect barely six hours of natural daylight.

The monotony of Scapa could – and did – gnaw at the nerves. It dulled morale and, worst of all, reduced efficiency and effectiveness.

To keep the men and their castles of steel on their toes, the Grand Fleet’s Commander-in-Chief – first Jellicoe and now Beatty, who felt the battleships had not borne the full brunt of the battle at Jutland – conducted sweeps of the North Sea.

And so six days before Christmas 1916, David Beatty ordered his ships to sea for a patrol of the waters between Shetland and Norway.

At dusk on December 19th, light cruiser HMAS Melbourne slipped past the entrance to Scapa and sailed into the night ready to take her place on the gun line in worsening seas.

By first light on the shortest day – around 9am – the gale was approaching its zenith – too strong for anything to be gained by keeping the Grand Fleet at sea. The ships were ordered to return to Orkney.

“Things became very uncomfortable indeed,” remembered George Iles, one of Melbourne’s cooks.

“We were being tossed about like a cork upon the angry sea and it became very dangerous indeed for any individual to move about between decks.”

The waves caused shells to break free from their racks and begin rolling around the deck.

One sailor sent to recover them was washed overboard. A second sent up the rigging to try to spot him barely got the words ‘Man overboard’ out of his mouth before he too was carried into the North Sea by a wave. There was no thought of stopping to save either soul.

The brand-new flotilla leader HMS Hoste was also struggling. Launched in August and commissioned in November, Hoste had been put in charge of several smaller destroyers.

Her steering failed on the second day of the sortie and she was sent home, accompanied by the destroyer HMS Negro.

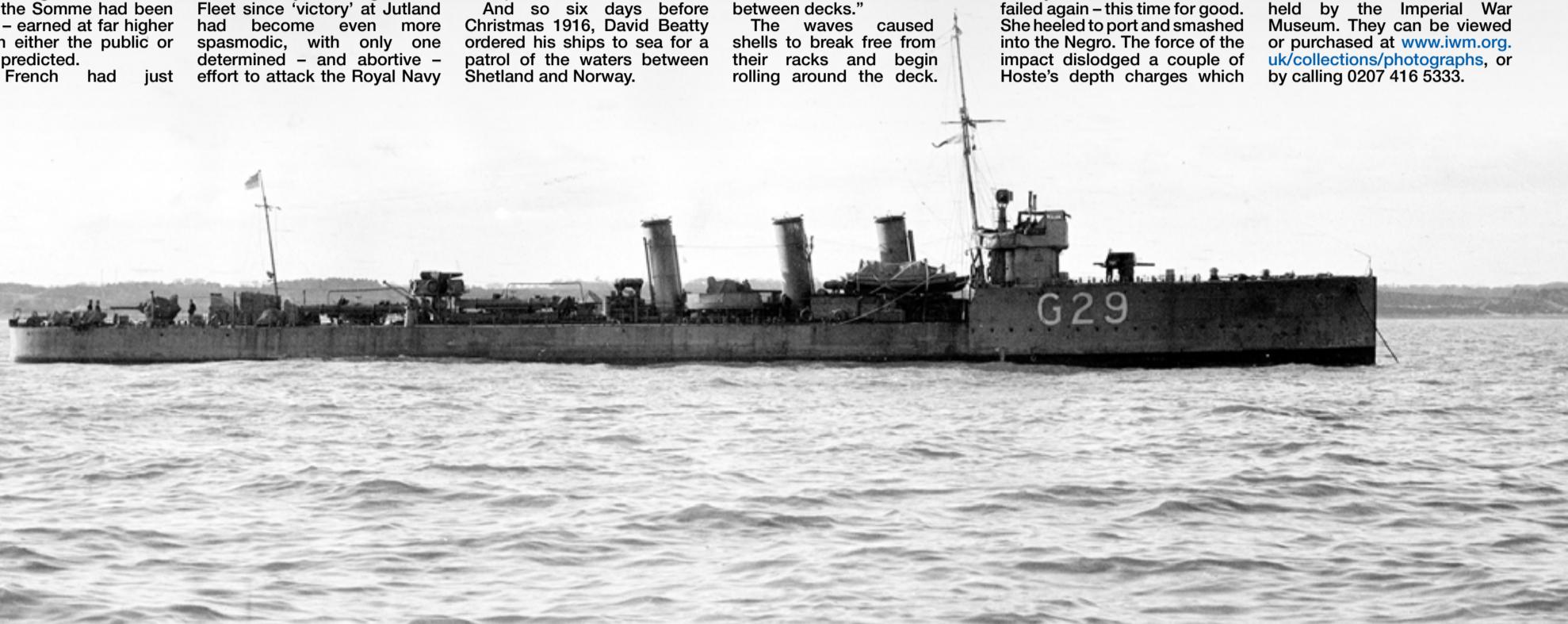
In the small hours of the twenty-first, Hoste’s rudder failed again – this time for good. She heeled to port and smashed into the Negro. The force of the impact dislodged a couple of Hoste’s depth charges which

detonated. Hoste’s stern was badly damaged, while Negro’s hull was holed, her engine room flooded and she began to sink rapidly, taking 51 men with her – more than half the complement.

Hoste remained afloat. For now. HMS Marmion attempted to take the crippled flotilla leader in tow while her sister Marvel took surviving crew off.

Twelve times Cdr Edwin Homan skilfully brought his ship alongside the Hoste, somehow succeeding in taking off all but four of the 138 men aboard before the bad weather and damage sustained caused Hoste to sink.

■ This photograph (Q 74312) is one of more than ten million held by the Imperial War Museum. They can be viewed or purchased at www.iwm.org.uk/collections/photographs, or by calling 0207 416 5333.



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DRIVING THE ROYAL NAVY COMMUNITY
FORWARD ONE JOURNEY AT A TIME



'Live your dream'

HERTFORDSHIRE MP Mike Penning was appointed Minister of State for the Armed Forces in July. Here Mr Penning tells *Navy News* editor **Mike Gray** about his military background and his first impressions on working with the Royal Navy.

ARE you finding your training tough? Are you a little bored with some aspects of military life?

Don't give up – aim high. As high as you like. Live your dream.

These are not empty words or meaningless exhortations – they come from the top of the ladder, and from someone who started on the very first rung.

Armed Forces Minister Mike Penning joined the Grenadier Guards as a teenager, and is now second only to the Secretary of State for Defence. If I can do it, says Mr Penning, so can you.

And he holds office in the department at a time when the Royal Navy is poised to benefit from some serious investment.

"The Navy is about to embark, over the next ten years, on probably the best time in terms of ships and the way we are configured than we have done certainly since the second world war," said Mr Penning.

"We will be leading the world in carriers – the Americans are fascinated by the Queen Elizabeth class, and other countries are too, so I think this is a really exciting time."

"It is a pressurised time, and it is hard – thank goodness for our bomb disposal guys yet again, in Portsmouth Harbour," he added, referring to the removal and destruction of a 500lb bomb from the Naval Base as dredging continued to prepare the way for the carriers.

HMS Queen Elizabeth is very much in the minister's thoughts just now. He recently visited the carrier and her younger sister HMS Prince of Wales, both in build at Rosyth in Scotland, and his trip to the Forth made quite an impression.

"I say this as a squaddie, but to stand on her deck in her dock, watching her being built – they gave me the privilege of standing at the top of the ski jump, and we had a seaman standing right at the other end of the flight deck. He looked about half an inch tall," said the minister.

"I think we need to sweat that asset, in soft diplomacy as well as in hard-headed defence."

Mr Penning has had several engagements with the Navy in recent weeks, and pride is a word that regularly crops up in our conversation.

"My first impression of the Royal Navy is that it is unbelievably professional, and what is really interesting is the sense of responsibility that really low ranks are taking on," he said.

"So when I go off and I am going to be briefed on X, I would have expected, as a soldier, to be briefed by perhaps a Warrant Officer, but very often it's a junior rating who will come and tell me what they are doing on a ship or what they are doing in their training."

"That is brutally honest, but it is factually correct. I didn't get

Queen when he was made a Privy Counsellor – and he was saluted by a Guardsman as he crossed the palace forecourt.

"Of course the Guards were very operational – we did a lot of spearhead roles" he continued. "I served in Northern Ireland.

"But what I found myself doing was volunteering for every single course that would get me doing something different and to stimulate my mind.

"I had my motorbike licence at 16, car licence at 17, HGV at 18. You name it, I did it – medic courses, signals courses – and what I ended up becoming was an asset so they could send me off to do something."

"I was unlucky, I suppose, in that the Guards Para got disbanded just as I was about to go that way. I then came across to another unit so I could go airborne again, yet again they got disbanded."

"But I ended up doing tons of freefall, doing the advanced freefall course down at Netheravon, and I got the little mushroom which no one ever recognises, just to be different I suppose."

"I needed a challenge – though I can't imagine more of a challenge than the one I have got now."

"I suppose it's about aspiration. As one door closes, another door opens."

"I would not be sitting here now if I had not gone into the Guards at 16."

"Where is that synergy, where is that link? That link, I think, is that the Army invested in me as that young feller who was only interested in boxing and rugby, and certainly not in anything intellectual."

"And at some stage, the powers-that-be will say it is time for another Min AF, and once I have had my time, however long that is, I can't imagine doing another job. I will just be a back-bencher."

Challenging it may be, but the sheer diversity of the portfolio appeals to Mr Penning.

"No two days are the same. All right, certain things are in the diary for Mondays, or Thursdays – I have just had my weekly call with the RAF, and I had the three chiefs in here the other day, so those sorts of things are routine – but what we talk about tends not to be."

"And I am on call. If it is an operational issue, it is mine and it is my responsibility, so I will take that call and come out, whether I am the duty minister or not."

"My team will be on duty over Christmas, and so will I. Much to Mrs Penning's chagrin."

Social mobility is a phrase that echoes round Whitehall, and Mr Penning believes he has demonstrated in practical terms just how powerful a concept that is.

"There will be someone else sitting in this chair sometime in the future; but I just want to leave those boys and girls out there with the thought that they could possibly be the one sitting here, no matter how difficult they are finding their training or how difficult they find things."

"You've got to live your dream, haven't you?"



● (Above and top of page) Armed Forces Minister Mike Penning meets the ship's company of HMS Kent, who explained their roles on the frigate and demonstrated some of the equipment with which they work

Pictures: LPhot Sean Gascoigne

impressed with senior Warrant Officers; I think they are a great asset across our Armed Forces.

"In the Navy, in particular – I met the Warrant Officer at Whale Island and the sheer depth of experience he displayed was a real eye-opener for me. I was very, very proud.

"The Navy, like the RAF, has such technical kit. The Army has technical kit too, but they don't have things like the Type 45s and carriers.

"The dedication of the Navy... I was on HMS Scott recently, and she is doing unbelievably important work, and the guys knew it, and they are very proud of it.

"And even when I was on HMS Kent the other day, when we were out in the Channel close to a certain aircraft carrier; the ship has a role to play, and they all knew exactly what their role was.

"She wasn't ramped up the way she would have been for a full operational deployment, but she was cruising more than happily, faster than the carrier..."

Having served in the Forces, Mr Penning brings a rare rank-and-file military perspective to ministerial office.

"I joined the Army at 16. My father had served, my grandfather had served, but I also wanted to get away from home and I wanted the freedom of being in the military," said Mr Penning.

"Was I a great soldier? No I wasn't – one of the admirals said to me the other day: 'You must have been a late developer, sir.' I guess that is how my sergeant-major would have described me..."

"That is brutally honest, but it is factually correct. I didn't get

substantive rank – I was acting L/Cpl twice – and I got very bored at times like most people that serve.

"Can I say it was fantastic the whole time I served? No, of course not, and anybody who says that is waffling.

"But actually the good times outweighed the bad times, and it was a great catalyst for me to be able to go on courses and train, and allow me to climb not just the political ladder – which I didn't take part in until 2005 – but actually to have the confidence to say you only have one chance in life, and you have to live the dream, follow your aspiration.

"So when the Prime Minister said to me, a couple of days after she took over, do you want to do the job you have been asking about for I don't know how many years... well, here I am.

"I'm an ops minister; I did police, I've done fire, I've done Northern Ireland. The one job in government I didn't enjoy was sitting behind a desk doing figures at the Department for Work and Pensions.

"I hated it, and everybody knows I hated it. There are really good ministers that can do that

job – but it ain't me.

"So now I think I have the best job in government.

"The boss takes the complete flak as the Secretary of State. I'm his deputy and that is where I want to be.

"I couldn't have dreamt, when I joined the Army in 1974, that I would be sitting here doing this job, and I am enormously proud – though I think my wife finds it difficult. She married me when I was a fireman..."

"I was with a group of soldiers from 5 Rifles last night, and I sat there and thought 'I was you.'

"When I was away with the Navy and I spoke with a couple of leading hands, again, I thought, 'I was you'. One of them was bored. One of them was happy, and I said I have been there and got the T-shirt. So I hope it is inspirational for them as well."

One of Mr Penning's previous roles in government was at the Department of Transport, when shipping was part of his portfolio – and the irony of an MP from the landlocked constituency of Hemel Hempstead taking on a maritime subject was not lost on him.

"But I made some really good

Penning's progress

MIKE Penning was born in North London, state-educated in Essex and joined the Grenadier Guards straight from school, going on to serve in Germany, Kenya and Northern Ireland.

His public service continued into a second career as a full-time firefighter in Essex.

There was also, *inter alia*, time to fit in stints with a family business and as a political journalist before he was elected to parliament in 2005 in the marginal seat of Hemel Hempstead.

Five years later, Mr Penning enjoyed the largest Labour-Conservative swing in the country, holding the seat with a majority of more than 13,000.

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Honouring the rugby pioneers

ROYAL Navy rugby union players marked the centenary of the first wartime rugby international match to be played in the Netherlands.

A RNRU squad travelled to Leeuwarden for four days of commemorations, the highlight of which was a centennial memorial match between RN North and RN East representing Scotland and England respectively in their Inverdale Challenge fixture – the first time one of the competition match's had been played overseas.

The teams were vying for the Commodore Wilfred Henderson Trophy, named after the Royal Navy Officer Commanding the Royal Naval Division in WW1.

The team from RN North comprehensively beat their counterparts from RN East 22-8 at RC Greate Pier in front of a large crowd, so reversing the result from 1916.

In October 1914, 1,500 men of three battalions of the Royal Naval Division under the command of Cdre Henderson were cut off after the siege of Antwerp.

Rather than become prisoners of war in Germany, they crossed the border into neutral Holland and were accommodated in wooden huts known as HMS Timbertown, a camp in Groningen, around 183km from the capital Amsterdam.

As the Great War raged and many of their comrades fell at Gallipoli and later on the Somme, men from Benbow, Collingwood and Hawke battalions formed a thriving British colony in the Netherlands.

In 1916 the first wartime rugby International was played in the Netherlands town of Leeuwarden, which allowed the players a rare release from captivity (the 20-mile rail journey took an hour) and the teams were formed from the Scottish contingent (Scotland) who played against a team from the English contingent (England).

The players produced a fast open game with plenty of passing movements and it was one of the best games seen, according to local reports. Around 2,500 people



● An image of the rugby game held in Leeuwarden in 1916

paid up to 40 cents to watch England beat Scotland 19-7.

This was followed by a second match between the two teams and the excitement around these matches led to the formation of the first rugby clubs in the Netherlands, the oldest being Delftsche Studenten Rugby founded in October 1918.

The commemorations were attended by Cdre Henderson's great-grandson Andrew Biggs, along with his wife Vivecca, son Edward and nephew Simon Stanley.

The players were welcomed to Leeuwarden by the town's Mayor Ferd Crone and the weekend also included Royal British Legion representative Ray Waller, RNRU Vice President Cdre Nick Roberts, British Consul John Cameron-Webb and the head of Netherlands Rugby Janhein Pieterse. Members of the Cape Breton Highlanders of Friesland played the pipes and drums as the teams arrived at the Town Hall.

The match was supported by the Rugby Make a Difference Foundation, headed by Ken Wright, who was inspired by the research of author Stephen Cooper's book *The Final Whistle*, an account of rugby during WW1.

It was Ken's intent that the centenary of the match should be marked by re-creating the game with present-day sailors. So the

RN East team, captained by PO Chris Sproston of HMS Dragon, represented England and the RN North team, skippered by Mne Pat Coy of 43 Cdo, were Scotland.

The final event of the weekend was a memorial service at the graves of the nine sailors who died during their time in the internment camp in Groningen.

RNRU representatives joined descendants of Cdre Henderson, members of the British Legion and the Rugby Make a Difference Foundation to honour those who had lost their lives in the service of their country.

The nine Royal Navy Servicemen buried at Groningen Southern Cemetery are:

- Stoker Thomas Bennett, 42, Hawke Bn, from Hull
- AB Ernest Bruce, 24, Collingwood Bn, from South Shields
- Pte Sydney Frank Fowler, 35, Royal Marines Light Infantry, from Staffordshire
- AB Percy Elliott Hedger, 22, Benbow Bn, from London
- Seaman Donald Macleod, 24, Benbow Bn, from Stornoway
- Seaman John MacLeay, 38, Collingwood Bn, from Lewis
- Seaman John Smith, 42, Collingwood Bn, from Stornoway
- Stoker Albert Thomas Vigar, 33, Benbow Bn, from Ontario
- AB Leslie Eugene Whitehead, 22, Hawke Bn, from Suffolk



● Andrew Biggs presents the trophy to Pat Coy



Pictures: PO(Phot) Des Wade and LPhot Dave Jenkins

I, Robotics

WHILE an extensive programme of trials is a team effort, perhaps only two people could legitimately claim to be the Unmanned Warriors.

But as it happens, both people – Royal Navy officers – have other, equally eye-catching titles.

Cdr Peter Pipkin has gained quite a media profile in recent weeks in his role as Fleet Robotics Officer, and it was Cdr Pipkin who shaped the overall Unmanned Warrior (UW16) experience.

And Lt Cdr Pete Whitehead was the man who planned the series in detail – as Assistant Fleet Robotics Officer, he goes by the somewhat hirsute title AFRO.

The two men, and those in the various teams from such partners as QinetiQ and DSTL, can look back on October with a mixture of pride and relief, as the reaction from all involved has been encouraging.

"The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and it would appear that industry got a lot from it," said Cdr Pipkin.

"I know they would like to see something happening as a result of it, but I think they got a huge amount of benefit working with us and with each other."

"It was not just a two-way thing – they were working together and coming up with things that didn't involve us at all in some cases."

UW16 saw around 40 companies and groups from industry, academia and scientific organisations travelling to the west coast of Scotland with more than 50 vehicles and pieces of equipment.

They were put through their paces at four locations – an initial trial in Cardigan Bay/Aberporth in Wales, then off Stornoway, Benbecula and Kyle of Lochalsh – in five themed trials, such as mine countermeasures and ISTAR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance).

The trials were designed to be collaborative rather than competitive, with the chance for civilian and military groups to learn from each other and work together for greater effect.

Cdr Pipkin said he hoped the momentum would be maintained, with particular themes being taken further in the next two or three years without the time,



money and organisation of another full Unmanned Warrior.

"Six months ago the appetite for another Unmanned Warrior was questionable, if it was there at all," said Cdr Pipkin.

"I think now people are up for it – though not annually; that would be too much and would not allow enough time to develop what we learned in UW16 or for new equipment and ideas to come forward."

"We might consider another one in 2019 or 2020 – things will have changed by then."

"It will not necessarily be the same people again – new firms and people will come into

this space as unmanned and autonomous technology reaches out into other areas."

Cdr Pipkin said he would like to see an increase in international participants next time – UW16 saw delegations from 20 countries – and from other government departments and agencies who could be early adopters of the new equipment and techniques on show.

"I was pleased with the response to Unmanned Warrior, but not particularly surprised," said Cdr Pipkin.

"Yes, we were hoping for that kind of success, and we had luck on our side with the weather, certainly in the first weeks when setting it all up."

"But yes, perhaps I was a bit surprised at just how well it all went."

Successes included the links with Joint Warrior 162 which saw ships, aircraft and personnel exercising at the same time in the same region.

Unmanned and autonomous vehicles on the UW16 roster gathered detailed environmental data from the exercise area that was fed back in near real time to Joint Warrior organisers,



● The Royal Navy's Fleet Robotics Officer Cdr Peter Pipkin is interviewed by a television news crew at Kyle of Lochalsh during Unmanned Warrior 2016

demonstrating the value of such equipment

"The feedback from there was again positive," said Cdr Pipkin.

"I think we got some way

into maturing the integration, and also the dissemination and exploitation of our products.

"We said that even if we do not hold another Unmanned Warrior some of this should become part of Joint Warrior – even if they just want an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) or underwater vehicle to play with, we now know how to make it happen."

Cdr Pipkin believes this is a seminal moment for Naval

innovation.

"I think perhaps 12 months ago some of us may have underestimated just how big and important Unmanned Warrior would be," he said.

"I genuinely think that this stuff is coming."

"I think Unmanned Warrior will be recognised as a point in time when we made the decision to do some things in a fundamentally different way."

Pictures: LA(Phot) Ben Shread except where stated. The picture of the MAST vessel and two Bladerunners in last month's edition (page 19) was supplied by Jon Harrington, of QinetiQ, the Technical Lead for HB4 Trials

Ex-tiffy oversees tech revolution

FROM apprentice to robot guru – Cdr Peter Pipkin has come a long way in his Naval career.

His first taste of Navy life

came at HMS Raleigh, where Peter undertook initial training before going on to his specialised artificer apprentice training.

Soon after he commissioned as an officer, adding Dartmouth to his CV as he worked towards a place in the weapon engineer branch.

His first ship, as an apprentice, was Type 23 frigate HMS Iron Duke, and he followed that with Young Officer Fleet Time in Type 22 frigate HMS Brazen and Type 42 destroyer HMS Nottingham.

Another Type 42, HMS Newcastle, welcomed him as Deputy Weapon Engineer Officer (DWELO), and he also spent six or seven months in HMS Invincible, making him one of a dwindling group of officers who has 'old carrier' experience.

Further core WE jobs followed, including a spell at the Joint Services Signals

Unit at Cheltenham – "a great opportunity to work with another government department," said Cdr Pipkin.

He then went back to sea for a punishing schedule with frigate HMS Kent as WEO, joining her during her Far East deployment in 2008 and staying on board during her short turn-round and subsequent deployment to the Middle East in 2009.

The warship won that year's

Desmond Wettern Award for the

unit that had had the greatest

positive impact in the media –

Kent even made the pages of

Hello as the CO was invited to a

royal wedding in Sweden.

After a stint as a Flag Officer

Sea Training (FOST) sea rider,

hands-on experience with the

Navy's future capability came

to the fore with a spell at Abbey

Wood, where Cdr Pipkin was

the requirements manager for

short-range air defence systems,

specifically 997 radar and Sea

Seceptor missiles.

"It was really busy and

challenging, but a great job – as a

lieutenant commander engineer

why wouldn't you want to be

working on delivering some of

our newest capabilities?" he said.

Which makes his latest post as

Fleet Robotics Officer (FRO) a

natural progression.

And with Unmanned Warrior

2016 in the bag, he and his

● (Left): Minister for Defence

Procurement Harriett Baldwin

looks at some of the Unmanned

Warrior systems at Kyle of

Lochalsh

● (Right) A REMUS 100

underwater unmanned survey

drone is deployed off Kyle of

Lochalsh

● (Below) MV Northern River

acts as mothership in the Little

Minch off Skye



Dragon power analysed

HMS DRAGON is trialling a new system which monitors energy usage in warships.

The software, known as Ship Energy Assessment – Condition Optimisation & Routing Enhancement System (SEA-CORES), has been fitted to Type 45 destroyer at Portsmouth Naval Base.

BAE Systems is leading the software development, working with technology suppliers to the shipping industry, James Fisher and Sons plc, Fugro, OSISoft UK Ltd and the University of Southampton. The collaborative project is part-sponsored by Innovate UK.

SEA-CORES has been developed to capitalise on the wealth of data which systems in modern ships produce. The software uses algorithms to identify the relationships between a ship's systems and recommends various strategies to optimise vessel performance.

Live analysis of the data transmitted assists the crew in monitoring performance of factors affecting the fuel performance including energy, stress, vibration, trim, hull and propeller state, increasing the operational efficiency of the vessel and reducing its through-life cost.

The trial will monitor Dragon's power and fuel consumption across a range of different weather conditions at sea, trim states, and ship configurations.

Director Ships Support for the UK's Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S) organisation Neal Lawson said: "Installing the latest technology on HMS Dragon demonstrates how DE&S, BAE Systems and the Royal Navy are working collaboratively to deliver cutting-edge innovations to one of the most advanced warships in the world."

Chris Courtaux, Head of Engineering and Energy Services at BAE Systems, said: "Modern warships are increasingly advanced and their systems produce a huge amount of data for our engineers to monitor and evaluate. Installing SEA-CORES technology on a Type 45 destroyer demonstrates a continuation of innovation and forward thinking at BAE Systems."

"The information from SEA-CORES gives the crew a unique insight into how their vessel is performing and informs longer term predictions, impacting on the remaining useful life of the hull."

"Our technology will provide the Royal Navy with valuable information that will enable it to make better decisions about how its fleet plans for and conducts operations."

BAE Systems is also leading a consortium of technology suppliers to develop SEA-CORES in the commercial sector – the software is being tested in tanker provided by James Fisher and Sons plc in Northern Europe until the end of next month.

Apprentices hone skills at Sultan

TOP air engineering apprentices from across the aviation industry took part in a training camp at HMS Sultan ahead of the national finals of the WorldSkills UK competition.

Mechanical and avionics candidates practised multiple test scenarios which they could encounter at the Skills Show, the largest skills and careers event in the country, which was due to take place at the NEC Birmingham as *Navy News* went to press.

Borescope orientation, riveting and physical inspections of helicopters were just some of the areas covered by the group during the visit to the Defence College of Technical Training's Royal Naval Air Engineering & Survival Equipment School.

Robert Barrett, 25, a third year apprentice currently working in wing construction for Airbus, was among the mechanical competitors taking part.

Having worked in retail, Robert moved to a career where his passion for aviation could be fuelled.

"It's an amazing experience to be here – as a

civilian you don't get many opportunities to be within a military environment," said Robert.

"Some of the companies that are here today don't do all of the tasks that we're going to be assessed on at WorldSkills, and so today gives us an opportunity to look at some of the them and have an idea as to how they might be run."

"We also get to meet other apprentices and hear about what they do within their own industries."

"We all work on aircraft and there is some common ground, but what we do can vary as some are involved in maintenance and others and involved with their manufacture."

Apprentices taking part have already come through selection events, with three RN Air Engineering Technicians (AETs) making the final eight.

For the winner of the mechanical classification there is the chance to represent the UK in the international WorldSkills event in Abu Dhabi next year.



Halcyon days for minehunters

TEARING along past the higgledy-piggledy outline of Portland's Breakwater Fort, this is Halcyon – and it's a glimpse into the future of minehunting after Whitehall pumped £117m into a joint project with the French.

Just 12 metres long and 3.5 metres wide, the unmanned Halcyon is at the forefront of the mine warfare of tomorrow, able to find – and destroy – underwater explosive devices.

The small craft can launch even smaller

submersibles which can identify and then neutralise mines found using explosive charges – all controlled by a handful of operators from a distance, either ashore or working from a cabin in a mission bay on a Type 26 frigate.

The system – which featured in *Navy News* in October last year – keeps 'the man out of the minefield' and means a task force doesn't necessarily need minehunters to pave the way for operations.

The money committed by the MOD and its French counterpart to the Maritime Mine Counter Measures programme will see defence firm Thales build on the lessons learned with the Halcyon system to produce a working prototype of an autonomous system for the Royal Navy/Marine Nationale by 2019.

The investment will secure around 150 jobs in the UK, mostly in Somerset, Manchester and Fareham.

DARE to dream

A DRONE is prepared for launch on a warship at sea when an operator sees part of it is damaged. No need to go to stores – someone calls up a file on a laptop and the replacement part is printed in 3D, fitted, and the drone is launched.

Not fanciful, or the stuff of science fiction, but a future scenario that is entirely credible, according to Lt Cdr Lee Packer, the Royal Navy's Discovery, Assessment and Rapid Exploitation (DARE) Innovation Programme Manager.

3D printing – also known as additive manufacturing (AM) – has extraordinary growth potential.

It is already being investigated and applied across numerous commercial markets, from rapid prototyping of mechanical parts to designing and building bespoke products for prosthetics and human/machine interfaces.

There have been examples of printing entire homes, cars and drones – HMS Mersey, with Southampton University, demonstrated the latter at Chesil Beach in the summer of 2015.

3D printing, in simple terms, is building a structure by printing thin layers of material one on top of another until the structure is complete.

It allows unique and complex shapes to be made easily using computer-aided designs sent to a 3D printer, exactly as you would for your home inkjet printer.

And the Royal Navy is at the cutting edge of these investigations.

Under the innovation agenda, and supporting the delivery of Maritime Strategy 2035, the DARE team is exploring

and experimenting with this technology to understand the possibilities of 3D printing parts at sea.

The evidence suggests that such printers could drastically alter the current logistics supply chain, provide unique opportunities to engineers both at sea and on the front line, and support greater cooperation with allies.

Through a recent demonstration with the Americans, DARE – led by Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff Innovation Capt Sharon Malkin – proved that the UK could provide replacement parts for an American drone by printing them, and the Americans proved the reverse with a British aircraft.

All it took was access to the right 3D printer and emailed print files.

In September Lt Cdr Packer presented the successful UK and US interoperability demonstration by showcasing two 3D printed drones equipped with parts that had been produced by the other Navy at the International Seapower Symposium, which was attended by heads of navies and admirals from around the world.

The Americans are also pushing ahead with the technology, and earlier this year used a metal 3D printer to successfully manufacture a flight-critical component for an Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft.

The US Navy has also embraced the FabLab concept – mobile design and fabrication laboratories equipped with modern digital tools and kit such as 3D printers, laser cutters, vinyl cutters for flexible circuit boards, routers, and digital design tools that use open-source software.

So there could come a time

when the RN is deployed and operating alongside the US Navy and equipped with a range of 3D printers.

When a part is required, an engineer would simply open an electronic file and click print.

If the file did not exist, or a prototype repair was needed, the engineer could design it on a laptop and print the part to ensure the correct fit, form and function.

All this could be done with and for allied forces.

The technology offers the

RN an opportunity to equip its ships with a modern technical workshop, and in doing so revolutionise the way in which engineers sustain operational capability.

The next step is to allow users to experiment with the technology, to use it to improve their daily business and fix problems using their engineering acumen.

Only by understanding what this technology means to engineers can the Navy exploit the opportunity that this technology provides.

College students pay visit

STUDENTS from five University Technical Colleges (UTCs) visited Royal Navy establishments and a destroyer to find out about engineering at the sharp end.

The 30 students from Scarborough, South Wiltshire (Salisbury), Bristol, Derby and Plymouth – all UTCs which are affiliated to the Royal Navy – were shown round training establishments HMS Collingwood and Sultan to look at hands-on weapon, marine and air engineering.

They also visited Type 45 destroyer HMS Dauntless in Portsmouth Naval Base to see how theory is turned into practice.

The Royal Navy is supporting the next generation of engineers by working closely with the affiliated UTCs to help develop skilled individuals that will support industry and help address the national shortage of engineers.

The Service is committed to the enduring success of the UTC concept by providing access to world class facilities and technical expertise to enrich the development of UTC students.

Currently six affiliations are in place, supported by a First Sea Lord affiliation statement and signed RN/UTC Charter – the sixth UTC, which was not represented on the visit, is Energy Coast at Workington.

These affiliations have generated much interest from the governing bodies and facilitated Royal Naval access and outreach activity to employer events.

Another affiliated college – Portsmouth UTC – will open next September.

VALUE
SERVICE
COURTESY

The Victory Services Club (VSC) is a private members' club located in London. It features a modern interior with a blue wall featuring the VSC logo and the words 'VALUE SERVICE COURTESY'. Below the wall are three photographs: a bedroom with a double bed and orange bedding, the exterior of a red brick building with a flag flying, and a restaurant interior with tables, chairs, and a chandelier.

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victorieservicesclub



TRUE GRYT

NO NOT pingu, he's used to these conditions.

But the men and women of HMS Clyde (pictured across the bay, berthed at King Edward Point).

Behind the grey hull of the offshore patrol ship, 20 or so men are thrashing around in the icy water between Clyde's hull and a slipway.

More than half the ship's company, led by CO Lt Cdr Conor O'Neill, volunteered to swim from shore to ship and back – a 100ft relay, not even one length of an Olympic-sized swimming pool. Piece of cake.

Except for the water temperature: 0.8°C.

Luckily, British Antarctic Survey scientists have built a sauna in one of the adjacent buildings, so the intrepid swimmers dashed up the slipway and into the sweatbox to warm up... apart from LS(Sea) 'Bart' Bartle who seemed unfazed by the cold Grytviken waters and was last man out.

Although not entirely obvious from either the sea temperature or these images, spring has reached the remote island paradise of South Georgia.

The weather in the austral winter generally restricts Clyde to patrols around the Falklands. Unlike HMS Protector, she's not strengthened for operations amid the ice.

So with the bridge and upper deck bolstered by ice lookouts, she headed out across 900 miles of open ocean, dodging bergs, bergy bits (smaller than icebergs) and growlers (smaller still) to conduct her first patrol of the season around South Georgia – like the Falklands, a British Overseas Territory.

Sailing is the only way to reach the craggy archipelago – there are no airstrips here and it's well beyond the range of any land-based helicopters.

With the summer season looming, tourism is set to rocket on the islands – it attracts around 10,000 visitors a year.

To cope with that influx, and any potential issues arising therefrom, the tiny South Georgian government requires extra staff.

Ferried to the island by HMS Clyde were: a deputy post-mistress, heritage adviser, museum assistant and taxidermist.

Having delivered their passengers, the ship's company enjoyed three days at King Edward Point – the only place in South Georgia the ship can berth.

"Everyone aboard looks forward to a South Georgia patrol – it's always a highlight of a South Atlantic deployment," said Lt Cdr O'Neill. "It's one of the privileges of serving in Clyde that we get the chance to visit this beautiful island and see some unforgettable sights."

With guides from the British Antarctic Survey, some sailors trekked north past frozen lakes and snow-capped ridges to have a look at Maiviken, a cove which looks out over Cumberland West Bay; its shoreline is beloved by penguins and seals.

Clyde's bish, the Rev Thomas Pyke, conducted a service in Grytviken church – supposedly the most southerly Christian house of worship in the world.

Prayers and hymns complete, the crew rejoined their ship and sailed about 40 miles down the coast from Grytviken to Gold Harbour (which has neither harbour nor gold – the name comes from the colour the cliffs turn when struck by the rays of the sun at first and last light).

The bay is one of the wonders of the natural world. Glaciers spill off the mountains into the sea (providing fresh ice for souvenir hunters from Clyde).

And on the shore 400 elephant and fur seals stand guard for upwards of 10,000 king penguins who cluster protectively around their offspring.

A small shore party was able to get ashore by boat to get closer to the wildlife and collect some fresh ice before returning to Clyde – and ultimately East Cove in the Falklands.

"It was an amazing few days," said AB(Sea) Jack Hopkins, "easily the best thing I've done in the Navy."

Pictures: PO(SC) Andy Barsby; ET(ME) Moray Horn and AB(Sea) Natasha O'Brien



Where Eagles Dared



pictures: po(phot) si ethell, chf



EXCEPT that most of the legendary action movie was actually filmed across the border in Austria.

Still, there were bound to be some birds of prey around for Bavarian Eagle.

Possibly. But in keeping with animal-themed military exercise names there are, apparently, no eagles in Bavaria (although there is a nest... but it served as Hitler's tea house...).

Anyway...

Fresh from some rare combined training with the boats of the Gibraltar Squadron, the men and women of 846 Naval Air Squadron – one of two which are used to carry Royal Marines commandos and their equipment into battle – flew more than 600 miles across Europe from their home at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset via Dover and an overnight stop at the huge US air base at Ramstein in the Saarland.

Their destination? The Luftwaffe base at Kaufbeuren, about 50 miles southwest of Munich and on the northern fringe of the Alps.

It was no journey on autopilot either; the two-day flight by the pair of Merlins served as crucial continental navigational training for the aircrew – and with worse weather than forecast, the final 175-mile leg had to be flown using ‘Jungle cunning’: low level, visual navigation in the rain. Hard work. Excellent training.

The Commando Helicopter Force normally makes use of Snowdonia or northern Norway for its mountain training – although the scale of the Welsh range limits their training to altitudes of about 3,500ft, while the peaks around Bardufoss rise to around 6,000ft.

So the squadron jumped at the chance to fly around even more dramatic scenery – and the opportunity of buzzing around mountains and peaks up to 10,000ft, where there was a dusting of autumn snow while the meadows and pastures were still a lush green.

“Neither Snowdonia nor Bardufoss prepare you for the sheer scale of the mountains in southern Germany,” said Lt Andrew White, a helicopter warfare instructor.

“With peaks up to as high as helicopters can legally fly (without oxygen masks) the terrain could not have been more challenging. The unpredictable winds and weather systems in such a large range proved to be of outstanding training benefit, building skills and confidence for the crews.

“With aircrew of varying experience levels on the detachment, this proved

to be the first time for several junior pilots that they had flown the Merlin in mountainous terrain.”

In addition, Kaufbeuren is just minutes’ flying time from King Ludwig II’s magical Neuschwanstein – inspiration for Walt Disney’s ‘Sleeping Beauty castle’ and Baron Bomburst’s home in Chitty Chitty Bang Bang – rising above a sea of trees turning every hue of brown in early autumn. As well as being a ‘must’ for the photo album, the iconic fairytale fortress serves as an unmissable waypoint for pilots navigating to and from the Alps.

The commando fliers’ training didn’t merely involve wending around the Alpine valleys at speeds of up to 180mph. There were also difficult – but vital – battlefield manoeuvres to perfect from landing in confined areas to setting the 14-tonne helicopter down on slopes to touching the wheels on mountain summits.

Ground crews experienced trying to maintain a state-of-the-art helicopter in unfamiliar surroundings, limited spare parts to fall back on, plus the language barrier of working alongside Luftwaffe personnel.

The latter also shared their knowledge of the region with the two-dozen British aircrew – the intricacies of flying in the Bavarian Alps and the proximity of the Austrian border (the Tyrol lies barely 20 miles south of Kaufbeuren).

“We were incredibly lucky with the weather in the mountains and successfully achieved the main training objectives within time available,” said the detachment’s operations officer Lt Ben Taylor.

“Aside from the flying training it gave personnel valuable experience in operating from a foreign airbase and liaising with their German counterparts.

“Hopefully the relationships we have cemented during the detachment with the German Air Force, and in particular at Kaufbeuren, will allow us to make a standing arrangement to achieve training for both qualified aircrew and Merlin conversion.”

Before flying home (via a stopover at Melsbroek Air Base in Belgium), 30 of the 846 NAS personnel made use of the Royal Navy’s outdoor centre at Bad Hindelang, also in Bavaria, where team-building activities including mountain biking, kayaking and climbing were laid on.

After a fortnight in southern Germany the 70-strong detachment returned to Somerset much better able to deploy to mountainous regions around the globe at short notice.





A place of turtle relaxation...

EIGHTY Gulf-based sailors took a break from the rigours of minehunting operations to get close to nature.

One week's adventurous training was organised for the crews of HMS Chiddington and Penzance when the pair were stood down from operational duties for seven days when they put into Muscat in Oman.

The sultanate is by far the lushest of the Gulf states and a favourite of the AT instructors at HMS Temeraire who organise various adventurous/team building activities.

Wadi Shab, a couple of hours' drive down the coast, is one of the country's most popular natural attractions: a steep sided gorge with turquoise pools and streams running all the way to the Gulf of Oman.

Groups from the two ships trekked the length of the gorge in the scorching sun until the pools and streams became a deep river and there was only one way to continue – by getting wet!

Under the guidance of the AT instructors, the teams swam through a fissure just large enough for head and shoulders to squeeze through and found themselves in a deep natural sinkhole with an impressive waterfall.

"This was the chance of a lifetime to see the real side of Oman, away from the hotels and shopping malls," said Chid's AB(MW) Daniel 'Digger' Gardner.

"Jumping and diving into the deep pools at Wadi Shab has been the highlight of my career so far, it was like something you would see in a recruitment video!"

Hiking, swimming, sea kayaking and stand-up paddle boarding were all on offer, with the sailors taking it in turns to lead groups around the rocky cliffs and headlands surrounding Muscat.

"The wildlife we saw while close to the rocks was a highlight for me, in particular the turtles and paddling in the middle of a huge shoal of flying fish," said ET(ME) Joe 'Spike' Hughes, also from Chiddington.

"The whole experience was a welcome break from the engine room and a good bit of free physical fitness!"

The crews topped off the week with a joint sports afternoon at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, as the ships went head-to-head in stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking and beach volleyball. HMS Penzance seized the glory with her engineering team 'The A-1 OPDEFS' taking first prize in the combined competition.

Penzance's CO Lt Cdr Neil Griffiths said after a week of fun and exercise "two happy and well-rested crews" would be taking charge of their vessels – and would be "much more effective as a result".

He continued: "With the requirement for our teams to be at such high readiness at all times, it's important to grab these opportunities to 'decompress' with both hands."

"This week has also served as a reminder that the Royal Navy cares about its people and that 'life in a blue suit' is not just a job but a way of life."



Bottom scraping under way to Sweep Caroline

SHE hasn't been out of the water for 32 years so it's not surprising to see the hull of the sole surviving vessel from the Battle of Jutland covered in barnacles.

Two tugs spent an hour easing HMS Caroline from her home at Alexandra Dock in Belfast to Harland and Wolff's Heavy Industries Dock for hull inspection and repair.

The work includes removing the marine growth, stripping paint from her hull and ultrasonic testing to check for areas of weakness and repairs.

Caroline, which has remained in the water since 1984, will have a marine-grade paint scheme applied to her hull before she is returned to her dock in the city's Titanic Quarter later this month.

The veteran light cruiser opened to the public in June, a day after the centenary commemorations for the WW1 battle, but vital work on her hull was delayed in order to capture summer visitors, with 16,000 people going aboard in five months to witness the result of her £15m restoration project.

She was one of more than 150 British warships that locked horns with the Kaiser's High Seas Fleet in the North Sea at Jutland, when she charged at the German lines on at least one occasion to unleash torpedoes.

The ship, which was nicknamed Lucky Caroline, was one of the fastest afloat in her day and during Jutland was used as a scout and escaped any major damage.

She was later taken to Belfast



THE
NATIONAL
MUSEUM

and used as a drill training ship and even a Naval operations headquarters during WW2.

Caroline tells the story of the Irish Sailor (the country wasn't partitioned until 1921).

Around 350 Irishmen died at Jutland and more than 10,000 of them served in the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, Royal Naval Reserve, Merchant Navy, fishing fleets, and maritime rescue services during WW1.

HMS Caroline's links with Belfast began on April 1 1924 when she became the headquarters and training ship for Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve's Ulster Division.

Repairs to the ship which

displaces 4,000 tonnes and is 122 metres long were completed last year making the ship safe for the next stage of restoration.

The work is being conducted by Belfast-based ship fitting specialists Blu-Marine.

The ship, which has welcomed 16,000 visitors so far, will function as a world-class museum, a cross-community centre and a meetings and conferences venue.

Caroline was handed over to the National Museum of the Royal Navy in 2012 and, in a joint venture with Northern Ireland's Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, they initially secured £1m from the National Heritage Memorial Fund to safeguard the



ship, £11.5m from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £2.7m from the Northern Ireland government to complete the restoration, preservation and interpretative work.

Caroline boasts the accolade of being the most accessible ship in the National Museum of the Royal Navy's collection, thanks to the installation of three glass lifts giving access to three of her decks.

Northern Island First Minister Arlene Foster said: "HMS Caroline immeasurably adds to the tourism offering for both Belfast and Northern Ireland. She is a natural addition to the impressive list of attractions."

Pictures: Darren Kidd / Press Eye





Picture: LPhot Dan Rosenbaum

Swordfish marks 75th anniversary

MEMBERS of the Royal Navy Historic Flight celebrate the 75th birthday of the debut flight of the Fairey Swordfish W5856.

The aircraft – the oldest surviving flying Fairey Swordfish in the world – first flew in October 1941 and was known as a Blackfish.

Built by Blackburn Aircraft at Sherburn-in-Elmet, she served with the Royal Navy's Mediterranean Fleet.

Little is known of her active service but she returned to Fairey's Stockport factory for refurbishment in 1942.

Used for advanced flying training and trials, the aircraft was transferred to the Royal Canadian Navy in 1944 and then stored in reserve.

Passing through the hands of at least two civilian operators after disposal, she was purchased by Sir William Roberts and brought to Scotland to join his Strathallan Collection, arriving in crates in August 1977 in a badly corroded condition.

In 1990, the aircraft was bought by British Aerospace and restored to flying condition. Following a successful test flight at Brough in May 1993 she was gifted to the Royal Navy Historic Flight and three years later was adopted by the City of Leeds, in tribute to the local companies that built Swordfish components during World War II. She now wears the City's coat of arms and

name on her port side.

Dave Skiddy, senior mechanical supervisor on the Historic Flight, said: "It's an absolute privilege to maintain our Naval history for the next generation of Fleet Air Arm Engineers."

With a major grant from the Peter Harrison Heritage Foundation, W5856 aircraft re-joined the display circuit in 2015, painted in the pre-war colours of 810 NAS embarked in HMS Ark Royal.

Historic Flight CO Lt Cdr Chris Götke said: "The Royal Navy has some of the world's most cutting-edge technology coming into service in the next few years in the form of Queen Elizabeth-class carriers and the fifth generation Lightning II multi-role fighter.

"However, when looking to the future you must reflect on history. A little known aircraft that entered service in the Royal Navy was the Swordfish. She first operated on 825 NAS in 1936 and then served as one of a few aircraft types all the way through World War 2."

"She operated in the longest battle of the war, the Battle of the Atlantic. The Swordfish also carried out strategic attacks such as the raid on Taranto. Crews showed phenomenal heroism during the attack on the Bismarck and on the Channel Dash in an aircraft that only flies as fast as a car drives."

■ Arctic Convoy tribute, see page 11



Giving thanks for an inspirational leader

PERSONNEL from HMS Collingwood attended a memorial service commemorating the death of Lord Nelson at the battle of Trafalgar.

Organised by the Nelson Society, the service at the Nelson Monument on Portsdown Hill was attended by sailors and cadets.

Leading the service was HMS Collingwood's Chaplain, Rev Adam Gay, who spoke of the relationship between Nelson and Admiral Lord Collingwood, along with the significance of his final battle.

Bugler David Navette from Her Majesty's Royal Marines Band Collingwood closed the service by playing the *Last Post* and *Reveille*.

Cdr David Johnston, Executive

Officer HMS Collingwood, laid a wreath on behalf of the CO Capt Andy Jordan.

"Trafalgar Day is a very important occasion for the Royal Navy," said Cdr Johnston.

"We meet today to commemorate and give thanks for the life of Admiral Lord Nelson, remembering his inspirational leadership, tactical brilliance and dedicated service which ensured the safety and freedom of this country."

The monument was constructed by Nelson's "companions in arms" following the Battle of Trafalgar as a memorial to Nelson but also has a practical purpose as it can be seen from Portsmouth harbour where it is used as a marker to bring vessels safely into port.

Picture: Keith Woodland

Flags tribute to Nelson Monument

THE Nelson Monument on Edinburgh's Calton Hill was colourfully commemorated as the landmark turned 200.

Celebrating two centuries since the telescope-shaped structure rose into the Edinburgh skyline, the famous memorial was decorated with colourful flags and had a commemorative plaque installed by the City of Edinburgh Council on Trafalgar Day.

A 40-piece Royal Marines band performed on Calton Hill before a drumhead service was held in front of the monument.

The new plaque commemorating the occasion was unveiled on behalf of the Lord Provost before a wreath was laid inside.

A two-minute silence was observed for those who lost their lives on October 21 1805 at the Battle of Trafalgar, including Admiral Lord Nelson himself.

The Lord Provost said he hoped the anniversary would remind locals of the story behind the Monument.

He said: "The new plaque will mark the 200th anniversary of the monument and the city's hopes for it to stand tall for at least another 200 years to come.

Capt Chris Smith, the Naval



Regional Commander for Scotland and Northern Ireland, said: "I am delighted to be able to represent the Royal Navy at the 200th anniversary of the Nelson Monument for Trafalgar Day.

"It is my honour to have been invited to join. Where we previously have only used our Royal Marines buglers for the event, this time we've brought the whole band which adds greatly to the ceremonial occasion.

The Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, which truly broke the mould of naval warfare, crushed the French and Spanish navies and confirmed the Royal Navy as the world's supreme maritime force – Nelson himself died at the battle but was, rightly, revered as a national hero.

"It is fitting that, more than two centuries later, we still pay tribute to this great man and the city's memorial still stands strong."

Pictures: LPhot Will Haigh



AMERICA CALLING

ROYAL Navy engineers line up on the flight deck (*pictured right*) of USS America during testing of the F-35B Lightning II strike fighter.

The team spent three weeks embarked in the amphibious assault ship putting the fifth-generation aircraft through its paces in the Pacific Ocean.

Led by Royal Navy veteran Lt Cdr Dale Collins, the UK's F-35B air engineer and ship integration project officer (*you can read about his illustrious career on the right-hand side of the feature*), the UK team were also joined by RAF Squadron Leader Andy Edgell and former Royal Navy pilot Peter 'Wizer' Wilson, now with BAE Systems.

The F-35B Integrated Test Force Logistic Test and Evaluation Team are part of the Air Test and Evaluation Squadron – known as VX-23, thankfully – based at Naval Air Station Patuxent River in Maryland.

The ITF comprises almost 900 military, government and contract workers conducting developmental test flying on all three variants of the strike fighter.

The force is spread over two bases, at Pax with nine aircraft, working on flight envelope expansion, and at Edwards Air Force Base in California, also with nine aircraft, working on mission systems and weapon integration. They work alongside 17(R) Test and Evaluation Squadron, who have previously featured in *Navy News*.

The UK has a team of 20 people – working for the ITF on every aspect of test flying – led by engineer and flight observer Cdr Toby McCann, and consisting of three test pilots (one RN), a mission systems specialist, two aircraft engineering officers (one RN), nine maintainers (four RN) and four engineering specialists from QinetiQ.

"A rigorous developmental test programme ensures the aircraft meets the contract specification, allows for early identification of issues, and gradually expands the flight envelope to deliver a safe capability to the fleet," said Cdr McCann.

The trials in USS America were the final embarked tests before the aircraft's first operational deployment with the US Marine



● The F-35B ITF Logistic Test and Evaluation Team aboard USS America, from left, Cpl Tad Staller, USMC, POAET(M) Sam McNicol, Sgt Scott Bradbury, Lt Cdr Dale Collins, Cpl Martin Whatmough, WO1 Scott Alexander, RAF, LAET(AV) Tom Rudge

Corps, expected to take place in USS Wasp in just over a year's time.

"The aim being to prove the aircraft can be operated and maintained in the most demanding of sea states and weather conditions," added Cdr McCann.

And it was the UK team who led the way as the

F-35B programme completed a new milestone – the first power module and engine swap on the jet to be carried out at sea.

During the work in America's hangar, the team spent a week on the initial swap, making sure to account and track for each step of the process by entering each maintenance step into the Autonomic Logistic Information System (ALIS) – a system which gives the F-35 team the ability to plan ahead, maintain, and sustain aircraft subsystems over the life of the jet.

Marine Staff Sgt Mark Veliz, a F-35B power line mechanic, said: "Taking a week to test an engine swap is how we find obstacles and how we fix them."

Lt Cdr Collins said: "Testing of the F-35B engineering events has been a huge success; we have accomplished way beyond our expectations.

"We completed and evaluated the very first engine and lift-fan removal and installation on an F-35B at sea, as well as 20 aircraft configuration

and weapon-loading events.

"Working with the US Navy and US Marine Corps has been a privilege and we have cemented long-lasting friendships over the last three weeks as we further develop this immensely capable aircraft for the future."

The ship embarked seven F-35Bs for the trials, the third and last, which also included Short Take-off Vertical Landing (STOVL) operations in high sea states as well as at night. The trials saw the aircraft loaded with inert 500-pound GBU-12 Paveway II laser-guided test bombs.

USS America, delivered in the spring of 2014, is the first of the America-class amphibious assault ships for the US Navy and has a ship's company of 1,687.

With a displacement of 45,000 tons and 257m in length, the San Diego-based ship can also fulfil the role of an aircraft carrier, able to carry 20 F-35Bs.

She can also accommodate Osprey tiltrotor aircraft and a complement of Navy and Marine Corps helicopters.

"The F-35 Lightning II is the most versatile, agile, and technologically-advanced aircraft in the skies today," said Lt Gen Jon Davis, deputy commandant for aviation, USMC.

The maintenance tests, which took place in arduous embarked conditions, will prove to be valuable experience for the UK team as they plan for the Royal Navy's own flight trial on the nation's new flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth in 2018.

"Planning is well under way for the moment when the ITF proves the aircraft's ability to operate from the carriers; building on the experience from USS America the team will expand the flight envelope to cover ski-jump take offs and vertical recoveries to the QEC flight deck," added Cdr McCann.

Also aboard USS America with the Salty Dogs of VX-23 were Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron (VMX) 1 from Edwards AFB and Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 211 from MCAS Yuma in Arizona.

The strike fighter will be flown by two squadrons – 809 NAS and 617 RAF – both comprising Royal Navy and RAF personnel and will be based at RAF Marham when not on duty with Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales.

■ See January's edition of *Navy News* for further coverage of the F-35B trials.



Wessex Mk3 to F-35B

– Dale's seen it all

HE completed his engineering training on the venerable Wessex Mk3 and Sea King Mk2 – now 35 years later he is working on the Royal Navy's fifth-generation jet fighter.

Lt Cdr Dale Collins is the UK's F-35 air engineer and ship integration project officer with the Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Two Three – VX-23 – at Naval Air Station Patuxent River in Maryland.

"It's truly amazing working with US and UK personnel on what is the cutting edge of aviation technology and the future of the UK's front-line maritime aviation capability for many years to come," he said.

His career with the Senior Service began in October 1981, when he joined as a junior air engineering mechanic.

Upon completion of basic training at HMS Raleigh and basic air engineering training at HMS Daedalus, he was assigned to 706 NAS at RNAS Culdrose to complete his training on the Sea King Mk2/5.

After the Falklands Conflict in 1982, Lt Cdr Collins completed a three-year tour on 820 NAS, embarking aboard HMS Invincible for Orient Express and a number of other operational deployments.

In 1987, the Royal Navy promoted him to Leading Hand and he completed a two-year apprenticeship at the Air Engineering School before returning to 810 NAS as a Petty Officer Air Engineering Artificer with the Sea King Mk6.

After completing various engineering assignments at RNAS Culdrose in 1995, he was assigned as the Watch Chief/Flight Senior Maintenance Rating with 814 NAS, became a flying maintainer, completing a number of deployments to the Middle East, and took part in Operation Bolton in Iraq.

Upon promotion to Charge Chief Petty Officer, he conducted counter-drug operations on the Dutch ship HNMLS Zuiderkruis.

Collins undertook the Royal Navy officer selection programme in 1998 and attended BRNC Dartmouth in 2000 as a sub-lieutenant.

He then became the Assistant and Deputy Air Engineer Officer on 814 NAS with the newly-procured Merlin HM Mk1. His assignment culminated in 2003 with Operation Telic in Iraq.

He completed subsequent assignments as the Air Engineering Training Officer at RNAS Culdrose and performed



a DES ship role at Abbey Wood, gained a masters degree in engineering from Kingston University in London before reporting as the Air Engineer Officer of 700M Naval Air Squadron in 2006, which featured Merlin HM Mk1 trials and counter-drug operations in HMS Ocean.

After promotion to Lt Cdr in 2008 and gaining Chartered Engineer status with the Royal Aeronautical Society, he underwent training in the UK and Germany before deployment with the Afghan National Army for six months to conduct Pakistan/Afghanistan border security operations.

Upon his return in 2009, the Royal Navy appointed him to the Helicopter Engines Project Team in Yeovil, where he served as lead project officer for the Merlin and Apache engines.

During his next assignment he served as the Senior Support Engineer at RNAS Culdrose.

Appointed as Senior Aircraft Engineer (Fixed Wing) in 2013, Lt Cdr Collins was named the Deputy Continuing Airworthiness Manager for the Hawk T Mk1 – the Royal Navy's fast jet trainer, the Avenger T Mk1 – the Royal Navy's observer trainer, and ScanEagle – the Royal Navy's Unmanned Air Vehicle, which operated from Type 23 frigates.

In 2015, the Royal Navy sent Lt Cdr Collins to the USA to join the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter programme.

He said: "I feel very privileged to be here, in the US, after all these years, doing what I enjoy most, leading UK air engineering personnel maintaining the F-35B Lightning II, supporting the introduction of the Royal Navy and RAF's future aviation defence capability."





Naval Service honours the fallen Never forgotten

A TROOP of Royal Marines Reservists are pictured right marching to Bristol Cathedral for one of the largest Remembrance parades outside of London.

Commandos from across the South West formed part of the marching contingent for this year's parade, with thousands of people lining Queen Square to see the personnel.

Lt Luke Stirling, 33, said: "Marching in the parade allows me to show my appreciation to all those men and women that have fought and died in the service of this country."

Thousands of Naval Service personnel took part in Remembrance services throughout the UK, while those on duty overseas also stopped to honour the fallen.

Sailors from **HMS Duncan** visited Hamburg Ohlsdorf Cemetery, the biggest non-military cemetery in the world. The Servicemen and women paid their respects at the three areas containing Commonwealth war graves.

The ship's company of **HMS Mersey** held a service of Remembrance in Souda Bay, Crete, while personnel from **HMS Bulwark**, including J Coy 42 Cdo, gathered to pay their respects off the coast of Somalia.

Capt Theo Hogg, OC Landing Craft for 4 Assault Squadron Royal Marines, said: "Today's service has been particularly poignant as it is almost ten years to the day since Marine Jason Hylton was tragically killed in Iraq, when his raiding craft hit an improvised explosive device on the Shatt-al-Arab waterway." One of the two Royal Marines mess decks in Bulwark is known as Hylton Barracks.

The old Christian cemetery in Manama, Bahrain, was the scene of a service attended by personnel from the **United Kingdom Maritime Component Command**. Twenty members of staff previously worked to tidy up the site ahead of the service, which was attended by the Prince of Wales. Personnel also held a private service on Remembrance Sunday, attended by bugler Lt Grant Bentley, one of the Battle Watch Captains.

On the other side of the world sailors from **HMS Clyde** attended the annual service at Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands while 55 sailors and Royal Marines held a service on the flight deck of **HMS Protector** off South Georgia in the South Atlantic.

Members of the RFA and Royal Marines from **RFA Wave Knight** took part in a Remembrance Service in Montserrat.

In the UK the main focus was on the national service at the Cenotaph in London, where more than 100 men and women of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service were on duty.

In the shadow of Leach Building - home to Navy Command - at **HMS Excellent** on Whale Island, hundreds of serving sailors and Royal Marines, plus civil servants attended the act of remembrance, led by the Venerable Ian Wheatley, Chaplain of the Fleet.

The Naval Service has lost 23 people since November 11 2015. The names of each one was read out by WO1 Mick Davidson (on behalf of the Royal Navy and RFA) and Royal Marines Regimental Sergeant Major WO1 Philip Gilby (on behalf of the Corps and the Fleet Air Arm).

A bugler from the Royal Marines Band Collingwood sounded the *Last Post* and, at the end of two minutes' silence, *Reveille*.

The Naval Service and MOD staff stood in silence across Plymouth as they remembered the country's war dead on with a two-minute silence on Armistice Day.

Royal Marines of 1 Assault Squadron, (based at Royal Marines Tamar), and civilian staff and sailors (of HMS Drake), held Armistice Day services in **HMNB Devonport**.

Army Commandos from **29 Commando** (the Royal Citadel) also staged a service at their base with families attending and children laying wreaths.

In a service conducted in their own Memorial Garden within Royal Marines Barracks Stonehouse, personnel from **30 Commando** Information Exploitation Group held a two-minute silence to pay tribute to the fallen. Visitors were welcomed to the service, including veterans and children from St George's Primary School.

In Gateshead Prince Michael of Kent joined reservists from **HMS Calliope** for a service, while in Scotland personnel from **HMNB Clyde** took part in services at Helensburgh, Glasgow, Edinburgh and the Commando Memorial at Spean Bridge.

Cadets from **Britannia Royal Naval College** joined the civic parade in Dartmouth, where Capt Jol Woodard, the Commanding Officer was among the wreath layers.

In Kingswear representatives from BRNC were among those who attended the unveiling of a memorial plaque in honour of the Free French Forces based there in World War 2.

Around 140 trainee sailors from **HMS Raleigh** attended the service held by the war graves at Horson Cemetery in Torpoint. The cemetery is the final resting place for 74 Service personnel; 48 sailors, 25 soldiers and one airman. Of those, 44 sailors and 21 Royal Engineers lost their lives when a German bomb hit an air-raid shelter within HMS Raleigh on 28 April 1941, during the Plymouth Blitz. Wreaths were laid and crosses of remembrance were placed on each grave by trainee sailors.

A sizeable Royal Navy contingent from shore establishments across south Hampshire took part in the annual Service of Remembrance in **Portsmouth**.

The Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Collingwood led a parade of 78 Navy personnel, marching into the city's Guildhall Square for the service conducted by the Very Reverend David Brindley, Dean of Portsmouth Anglican Cathedral, and Father James McAuley of St John's Roman Catholic Cathedral. HMS Collingwood provided a 24-man guard and there were 18-strong

platoons from HMS Sultan and HMS King Alfred. Ten ceremonial staff from HMS Excellent also joined the parade.

The service concluded with a wreath-laying ceremony at the war memorials adjacent to the Guildhall. Among the wreath-layers were Rear Admiral Richard Stokes, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Support), Maj Gen Rob Magowan, Commandant General Royal Marines, and Capt Sam Shattock of the RFA.

A brand-new Wildcat and a legendary Swordfish flew past St Bartholomew's Church at **Yeovilton** where 200 personnel from the nearby air station - Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army Air Corps, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, civilian staff, contractors, veterans and families - gathered for Remembrance ceremonies.

As well as being the most poignant date in the military calendar, November 11 is the most important date in the Fleet Air Arm's history, the anniversary of the attack on Taranto when a small number of Swordfish decimated the Italian Fleet at anchor in 1940.

Following prayers and the reading of the Roll of Honour, the two-minutes silence was announced by a Royal Marine bugler sounding the *Last Post* from the church tower.

The ceremony concluded with a flypast of the Royal Navy Historic Flight's Swordfish, which scattered poppies over surrounding fields.

POPTI Natalie Bavister laid a wreath on behalf of the Royal Navy at **Wembley** before the England v Scotland World Cup qualifying match. Natalie, based at HMS Nelson, is captain of the women's football team and was joined by reps from the Army and RAF.

Sailors from **HMS Sultan** took part in a number of local Remembrance Sunday events throughout the community.

At the War Memorial Hospital, Gosport, Capt Peter Towell, the CO of Sultan, laid a wreath on behalf of the base. At the Fleet Air Arm Memorial, Lee-on-the-Solent, Cdr Mark Hamilton, the Executive Officer of HMS Sultan joined Rear Admiral Keith Blount, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Aviation, Amphibious Capability & Carriers) in laying a wreath. Lt Cdr Joe Wood, the First Lieutenant at HMS Sultan, laid a wreath at Lee-on-the-Solent's Sunken Garden.

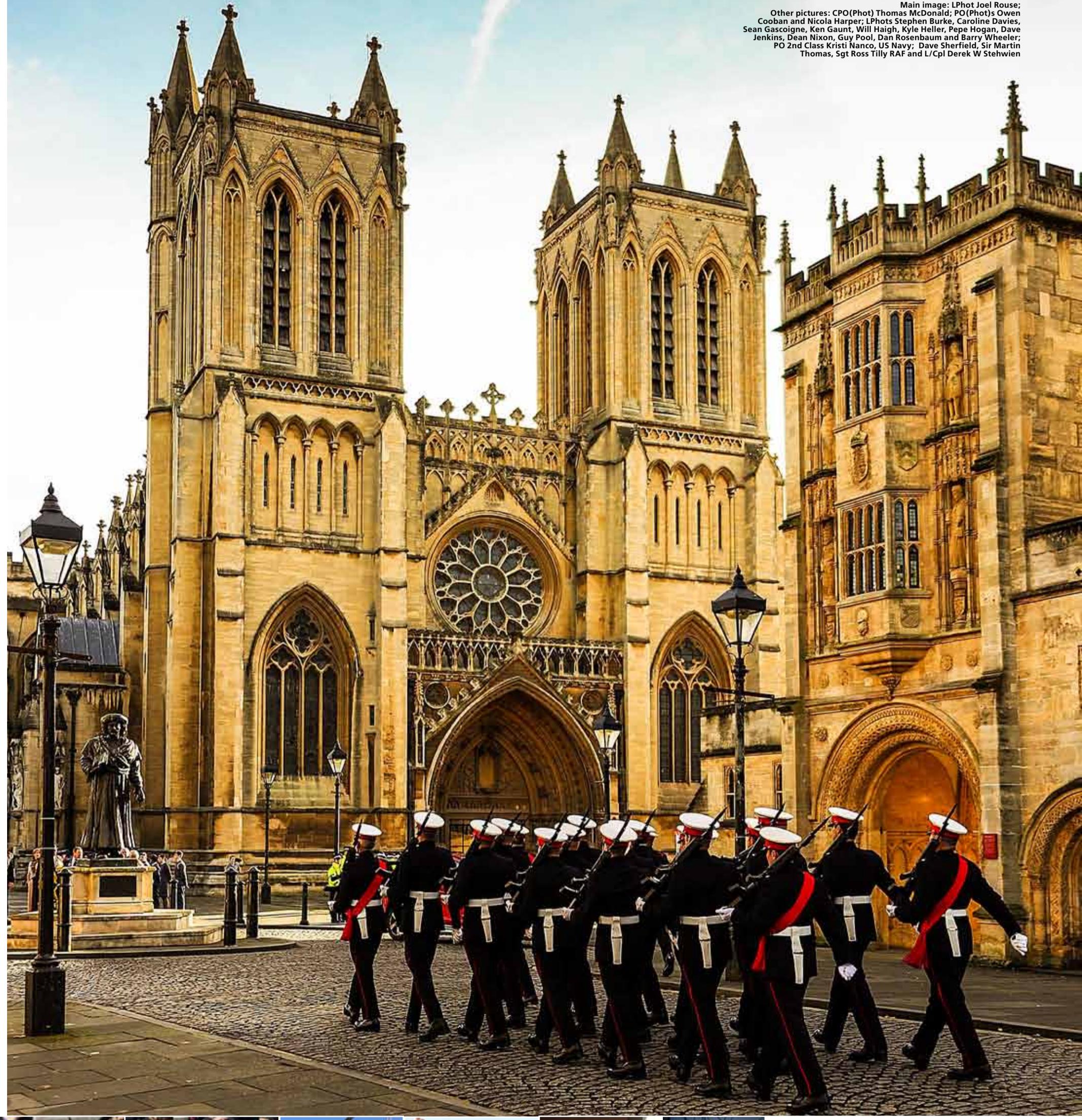
The weekend prior to Armistice Day saw 400 serving and veteran submariners, including from WWII, attend the **Submariners' Remembrance Service and Parade** at Middle Temple Gardens, Embankment, London.

The unique service and parade is held each year to honour submariners of all generations who have Crossed the Bar.

Finally, in New York Cdre Martin Connell is pictured below taking in the view from the 102nd floor of the One World Observatory at the One World Trade Centre. The panorama was part of a memorial tour for members of US Navy Expeditionary Strike Group 2 and their RN guests during Veterans' Week.



Main image: LPhot Joel Rouse;
Other pictures: CPO(Phot) Thomas McDonald; PO(Phot)s Owen Cooban and Nicola Harper; LPhot Stephen Burke, Caroline Davies, Sean Gascoigne, Ken Gaunt, Will Haigh, Kyle Heller, Pepe Hogan, Dave Jenkins, Dean Nixon, Guy Pool, Dan Rosenbaum and Barry Wheeler; PO 2nd Class Kristi Nanco, US Navy; Dave Sherfield, Sir Martin Thomas, Sgt Ross Tilly RAF and L/Cpl Derek W Stehwien



Valiant memento

I READ with great interest the report on the Valiant celebration in October's *Navy News*.

My husband CPO Michael 'Mick' Elwin served in her from 1975-77 under J F Coward.

On one visit they went to Bremerhaven where the crew were presented with a bottle of old grog.

I still have the bottle, empty of course, and I remember a fabulous mess dinner held at the Continental Hotel in Plymouth in January 1976.

Mick enjoyed his time in Valiant. Sadly he died in 2010. I have a report from October 1976, celebrating the 75th birthday of the Submarine Service, in which Cdr Coward was interviewed.

Alison Elwin
Portsmouth



We received saluting base

REGARDING the letter in October's edition about the saluting base from HMS Repulse.

I was a Deck Cadet in RFA Regent in Singapore on March 8 1984 when the base arrived on board, pictured right.

I don't believe we were told where in the UK it was to be delivered to.

I remember being tasked to move it below and discovered that while it had stood out in the sun the brass had become too hot to handle.

Stuart Talton
Former RFA 3/O
Lincolnshire

I SERVED in HMS Repulse, the Polaris submarine. We received the same saluting plate mentioned in

Peter Wythe's letter in October's edition, by now it was chrome plated. It was also received with part of the story you told.

We were told that it was illegally removed from the previous Repulse and so sent to us.

It was mounted on the bulkhead at the bottom of the main access hatch, opposite the ship's crest and battle honours.

This was passed by anyone coming from the control room on one deck, to the accommodation space on two deck.

Now the submarine is in long-term storage, I take it that the plaque was removed and now is in a museum, but I don't know its current location.

Alan Elliott
Ex-CPOWEA



Marine threw up in green beret

IN the early 1960s I was a Royal Marine signaller stationed at Poole, the training base for landing craft crews.

In those days Loch-class frigates were the smallest ships to carry a marine detachment.

Loch Fyne came for a visit to Bournemouth, just a few miles down the coast.

Naturally, Jack and Royal went ashore in uniform, the world's finest trapping rig.

During the evening the weather blew up; the ship's boats could not pick up the revellers so coaches were laid on and they were brought back to us for the night.

Conditions were easier the next morning, and Pusser, not wanting to spend more money on coaches, ordered they be ferried back on our various landing craft.

The craft I was on had been

painted the day before; the stink of paint plus the still choppy sea plus some really fearsome hangovers meant most of our passengers looked more than a little queasy.

The corporal coxswain was not impressed.

"I spent all day yesterday painting my war canoe - if any of you lot do anything stupid there'll be big trouble!"

One young Marine in his best blues was very obviously losing control. "I'm warning you - make a mess and you're over the side!"

Terrified by the threat, but unable to stop the force of nature, the lad was very helpfully sick in his cap.

At once, the matelot behind him said "Two's up on your cap, Royal."

Ken Brotherhood
Stockport

Can you solve mystery of my father's ships?

I AM a former Royal Navy Radio Operator (T) who served in the 1970s, now writing a book about the Service during WW2 of my father Lewis Hale.

Having recently acquired his service record and P&V ledger from the records office at Swadlincote, I was disheartened to discover that not a single one of his ships was mentioned.

Upon further investigation I discovered that this is far from uncommon, and many people that travel the same route get the same result.

So I took it upon myself to hire a very well-connected archive researcher, and for a reasonable sum let him loose on the National Archives at Kew.

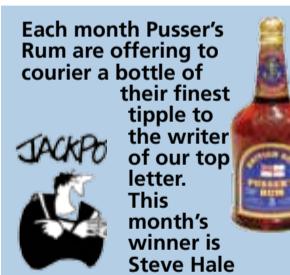
After a couple of months of painstaking research, the poor man sent me everything he had been able to glean from the information I had been able to supply him with.

But lo and behold, not one new ship name emerged other than the ones I already knew about, and even worse his name did not appear in the official archives ONCE.

The researcher was really quite apologetic and seemed every bit as disappointed as I was.

Signalman Hale left the troop

Each month Pusser's Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest tipple to the writer of our top letter. This month's winner is Steve Hale



carrier HMT Pasteur at Scotland in October 1942 and joined HMS Indomitable in January 1945 – but there are no records as to where he was in between.

I ask if any of your readers knew of Signalman Lewis Hale, JX/165696. He would have been known as 'Binnie', came from Kentish Town, London, and was a very accomplished musician, playing accordion, piano and guitar. From a diary I recently found of his, in 1942 I know he served on HMS Erica, SS Monarch of Bermuda, MV City of Edinburgh, SS Clan Campbell, SS Princess Marguerite, HMT Mauretania and HMT Pasteur.

He spent most of 1941 aboard HMS Jervis, could have served on HMS Capetown and certainly spent most of 1945 aboard HMS Indomitable in the Pacific.



● Signalman Lewis Hale

There's a distinct possibility that some time in 1943 or 44 he may have been involved with convoys to Russia, and possibly had some role in the Normandy Landings.

In its present form the book has huge swathes of the war unaccounted for. I hope that somebody can tell me a bit more about what my father gave for his country.

Steve E Hale
stevehale1@hotmail.co.uk
Home phone: (44) 0208 551 4929, mobile 07874 217330

Aden ops patch plea

DURING 1962/3 I served in HMS Messina, a Landing Ship Tank.

We carried on board 42 Commando, 2 Parachute Regiment, the tanks of the Royal Scots Greys and the King's Own Scottish Borderers.

During this time we were carrying out operations in the Radfan district of Aden.

I have had trouble finding the two Combined Services patches that were normally issued for these combined operations.

Can anyone help me obtain these patches?

Christopher Roddis
Cr.salt@hotmail.co.uk



I have Mantis plaque

I READ with interest the article Fast and Furious on Page 20 of October's edition.

A few hours earlier I had the plaque, pictured above, that was on a wall of a former church in Lowestoft, which commemorated HMS Mantis, one of the bases for such craft.

The previous week I was in Falmouth where there is a plaque commemorating the departure on March 27 1942 of the Saint Nazaire dry dock raid.

Another plaque I discovered (I now do hydrographic surveying as a civilian so am often in ports around the UK) was one on Regent Road just up from the River Yare which stated it was the headquarters of the Fleet Air Arm.

Another FAA HQ was on the Isle of Sheppey at Eastchurch around 1910. It was around then that the very first landing of a British plane on a ship took place at Sheerness.

The museum in Blue Town, Sheerness, also suggests that the term 'chip off the old block' stems from the fact that dockyard workers in HM Dockyard Sheerness were allowed to take no more wood to build the houses in Blue Town than they could carry on their shoulder. It was the museum that suggested that Eastchurch was a FAA HQ.

I was also interested in your article on page 38 about HMS Bristol.

I remember reading a *Navy News* article in 1981 with an aerial picture of her with a Limbo mortar well turned into a swimming pool.

Bristol in my time was unfortunately known for two very serious engine room fires.

Nigel Godfrey
MV Confidante

Great paper

I WOULD like to congratulate the editor of *Navy News* and his team.

I have just read a copy of *Navy News* that I picked up at my son's school careers evening.

What an amazing publication; the quality and presentation are outstanding great job, well done you and all the people involved

John Holden
Former Royal Marine

NAVY NEWS

Mail Point 1-4, Navy Command, Leach Building,
HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY

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Editor: Mike Gray 023 9262 5257 or Mil: 93832 5257

Editorial

News editor:

Richard Hargreaves
023 9262 5255

Production Editor:
Lorraine Proudlock
023 9262 5282
edit@navynews.co.uk

General enquiries:
023 9262 3553

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● Naval personnel lighten the mood with a snowball fight at HMS Elfin in Northumberland in January 1945. Elfin, at Blyth, was the base for the 6th Submarine Flotilla, and the war would still have been very much in everybody's minds – so the chance to let off steam would have been most welcome. Those wearing skates were making use of a frozen tennis court at the base. The image was provided by Louis Mackay, whose mother 2/O Joan Sanderson is the Wren in the middle of the image wearing a white scarf. Other names annotated on the back of the picture are, from left, Pam Cons, Doro Hickson, Oscar, Peter Piper, Jack Whitton, Sam Brookes (the target of the snowballs), Johnnie Wildes and Kett. This wartime public relations picture had Admiralty – Secret marked on the reverse – presumably, as Louis says, to prevent information about HMS Elfin's snowball capability from falling into enemy hands...

Different demands but still rewarding

PUBLIC relations specialists Chief Officer Pamela Williams WRNS and Lt Cdr Francesca Woodman RNR have almost 60 years of Naval Service between them.

Over the decades there have been huge changes in both the role of women in the Armed Forces, as well as in the media – but the rewards have not diminished.

Pamela Williams joined the WRNS in September 1953 at the age of 19, hoping to combine journalism, travel and a career with good prospects – which she achieved during her 29-year career in the WRNS.

She trained at HMS Dauntless as a Wren Writer (G) and went on to complete officer training in 1957, finally leaving the WRNS in 1983.

Pamela worked in a variety of jobs, ranging from secretarial duties, recruiting, and PR, taking her to Hong Kong, Singapore, Malta and the USA.

Pamela took on her first PR role as a First Officer at HMS Collingwood – it came with her main job.

When she left in 1974 the *Southern Evening Echo* reported that she had been thrown into Naval PR at the deep end when she was the Officer in Charge of Wrens at HMS Collingwood.

It mentioned that she had quickly organised Collingwood's newsdesk and with her "enchanting approach" charmed even the most hardened reporters.

From Collingwood Pamela went to DPR(N) in the Ministry of Defence as Head of WRNS PR.

She became the Navy co-ordinator for the first military "fly-on-the-wall" documentary, *Sailor* (1976), which went on to win several documentary awards.

She was also involved with the TV series *Warship* and the radio programme *The Navy Lark*.

At that time in MOD, the national press all had individual correspondents for each of the Services and she got to know the Fleet Street journalists very well, including Desmond Wettern.

Pamela said that she loved the PR work during her career.

When she left in 1982 she commented that opportunities in the WRNS were widening every day that passed, but that women were unlikely to command a Polaris submarine.

While strictly true – Polaris boats no longer patrol – in 2016 those opportunities have opened up far more than she envisaged.

Lt Cdr Woodman has had a career that has spanned the WRNS, the Royal Navy and now the Royal Naval Reserve.

As a late entrant to the WRNS in 1989, having been a teacher prior to joining, she was completing WRNS officer training at BRNC Dartmouth when it was announced that the WRNS and Royal Navy were to amalgamate.

"I joined as a Wren in blue for a short period and then switched to gold, so I have bridged the changes," she said.

"The biggest changes have reflected the rapid technological advances in society.

"The demise of the old PR

pack system and pen and ink to electronic ways of working has certainly made correspondence more efficient and quicker!"

In an echo of Pamela's ambitions, Francesca also joined for the adventure and a varied career.

Joining the Navy must have been in her blood as her great-great uncle was a gunner who died at the Battle of Jutland in HMS Defence, and she is the fifth generation of her family to join the Navy.

Francesca joined the Media Operations Branch of the Royal Naval Reserve in 2003, two years after completing her Short Commission.

Since then it has become a full-time career.

"In the RNR I have done far more than I ever imagined and have had a fantastic time," said Francesca.

"I have been able to work and then take time out to fulfil my passion of adventure and travel – it is a perfect work-life balance for me."

Her career in the Media Operations Branch has taken Francesca to Iraq, Afghanistan



● Lt Cdr Francesca Woodman on board HMS Bulwark in the Middle East

(twice), the Falklands and Bahrain, and she was also Staff Media Officer at Flag Officer Sea Training, amongst other roles.

"With many highlights, including jumping out of a helicopter onto a snowy field in the middle of nowhere in Norway, working at the Olympics stands out as it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

"I was with the media when the Olympic torch flew into Culdrose and was media minding on HMS Ocean when it sailed up the Thames."

"What more could I ask for?"

● 1/O Pamela Williams at the Silver Jubilee Spithead Fleet Review in 1977, where she ran the press centre



Deaths

Cdre Daniel J Bradby. HMS Nelson, Drake, Birmingham, Devonshire, Dryad, Rothesay, Rhyd, Victory RNB, Verulam, Excellent, Leopard, Cossack, Diligence, Delight, Naval Attaché Bonn. MOD DN Plans. Oct 16.

Capt Colin M Sandy RNR RD*. List 1 RNR. Oct 25.

Capt Francis G Thatcher. HMS Victory RNB, Sultan, Terror, President, St Angelo, Dolphin, Vanguard, Drake, Falcon. Admiralty Board, Defence Attaché Santiago. Oct 28. Aged 96.

Surg Capt Peter J Truesdale. HMS Drake, Cochrane, Pembroke, Daedalus, Forth, London, Ark Royal, Torquay, President, Seahawk. Chatham Portsmouth and Devonport. Oct 16. Aged 84.

Col William B Stater CBE VRD RMR. RMR Merseyside. Oct 13. Aged 91.

Cdr Robert K Easson. HMS Intrepid, Temeraire, Dryad, Excellent, Hermes. HMY Britannia. CINCFleet, CINCNAVHOME Cd, FO Portsmouth. Oct 29. Aged 74.

Surg Cdr Jane E Risdall. HMS Sheffield, Invincible, Nelson, RHN Haslar, INM Alverstoke, Royal College Defence Medicine Birmingham. Oct 18.

Lt Cdr Arthur N Davies. HMS Victory RNB, Caledonia, Swiftsure, Newfoundland, Hornet, Kenya. Oct 6. Aged 89.

Lt Cdr John Scott. Served HMS Superb, Indefatigable, Urania, Excellent, Dampier, Pellew, Vernon, Kemerton, Wakeful, Gurkha, St Vincent, Juno, Glamorgan, Dryad School of Maritime Operations, OIC RN Schools Presentation Team, PWO Appointee DNO(A(X)) and Staff Officer Scouts. October 5. Aged 82.

Lt Cdr Donald C Lawrence. HMS Goldcrest, Lincoln, Royal Arthur, Bermuda, Victory RNB, Lagos, Manxman, Peregrine, Gamecock. NATO. Oct 28. Aged 86.

Lt Alexander D Fear DSC RNR. HMS St Christopher. Oct 28. Aged 97.

Jack 'Jim' Barrett. Chief Yeoman of Signals. Boys' training ship HMS Arethusa, joined RN as a Boy 2nd Class. Aged 17 and at sea when war was declared, served in HMS Faulknor on Russian convoys and at Allied landings at Salerno. Completed 25 years. Sept 1. Aged 95.

Ken 'Rocky' Hudson Master at Arms. Served HMS Ashanti, Bulwark, Arethusa, Nelson and Dolphin, Hong Kong Squadron and as a CPO aboard HMS Hermes during Falklands Conflict; also Derby recruitment office, Culiera, Spain Sept 22. Aged 70.

Derek Cook LEM(Air) FAA. Served 1960-71 HMS Collingwood, Ariel, Seahawk, Fulmar, Ark Royal, (Histon) Boscombe, Triumph, Daedalus, Goldcrest and RNB Victory. Oct 21. Aged 72.

Lenard Sturdy. Served HMS Kenya, Orion and Superb. HMS Kenya Association.

Thomas Short. A/A HMS Newfoundland 1943, also HMS Raleigh, Drake, Eaglet, CONH, Defiance. HMS Newfoundland Association. March 3. Aged 93.

John Bagley. HMS Newfoundland 1955-56, also HMS Ganges, Implacable, Leeds Castle, Newcastle, Excellent, Adamant, Centaur and Victory. HMS Newfoundland Association. Aug 23. Aged 78.

Alan Brown. HMS Matchless on convoy duties and later 63 Flotilla Coastal Forces. Later commanded a torpedo boat and was present at D-Day. His boat was later used to transport Churchill and Lord Ismay from Utah Beach. Sept 29. Aged 92.

Peter Vernon Brown. Served 1944 to 1946 in HMS Belfast and HMS Euryalus. At the end of WW2 HMS Belfast was assigned to sail with the Task Force for Shanghai, arriving on September 19 1945 at the same time as his father was granted priority release from the Japanese Civilian Prison Camp in Yangchow in order to return to Shanghai to

get the gas company up and running. The CO of Belfast granted him 24 hours leave to locate and meet his father – an emotional reunion as they had not met for five years. He was thought to be the first British sailor to set foot on Shanghai soil from the Allied squadron. Life member and President of Torbay Branch CTB. October 22. Aged 90.

LS Joseph Burns. Served in HMS Ajax in 1944. October 28.

John 'George' Sexton. Served 24 years, achieving the rank of Fleet Chief; left Navy in 1978. HMS Undine, Scorpion, Albion, Sultan, Forth, Fisgard/Raleigh, Bulwark, Ark Royal, Alacrity. HMS Bulwark, Albion and Centaur Association. February 15 2015.

Frank Gurdan Stoker 1st Class. Served HMS Whitesand Bay and Myngs. Oct 22. Aged 87.

Martyn Heightom: Director and stalwart of maritime heritage community. First Head of Secretariat, later Secretary and Director of National Historic Ships Committee, now National Historic Ships UK. Former CEO of Mary Rose Trust, Trustee and Executive of SS Great Britain and organizer of first International Festival of the Sea, in Bristol in 1996. Also led the Merseyside Maritime Museum development in 1980s. Trustee and Chair of the Technical Committee for the HMS Victory Preservation Company, Trustee of HMS Caroline, member of Cutty Sark Advisory Committee, served on the Council of the Society for Nautical Research and was a Liverman of the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights. November 6.

Royal Naval Association

Stanley 'Stan' Hill FFA. Served 1950-60 HMS Eagle, then enlisted in the RAF 1962-77, completing pensionable service. St Helens branch. Sept 18. Aged 81.

Donald Bones AB. Served 1942-47 on Atlantic and Russian Convoys in HMS Wild Goose (with Capt Walker's hunter killer group, taking part in sinking a number of U-boats, including three in one day). St Helens branch. Sept 24. Aged 92.

Jack Beck Seaman. Served HMS Eskimo at end of WW2. Skipton & District RNA. Sept 28. Aged 89.

Thomas P Bryant Stoker. Served RNPSA on BYMS. North London RNA. Oct 21. Aged 89.

Association of RN Officers and RNOC

Captain John M Jessop. HMS Eagle, Warrior, Mercury, Alert, Duncan, Terror, Daedalus, Dolphin, Artemis, Telemachus, RAN Sydney, Vengeance. Malaysian Govt. Dir Naval Signals. Oct 9. Aged 90.

Lt Cdr James C Dixon JP. HMS Reggio, Kiwi, Pincher, Royal Prince, Dieppe. Oct 17. Aged 88.

HMS Illustrious Association

Arthur E Lawson Stoker 1st class. HMS Illustrious IV 1948-49, subsequently in minesweepers. Northern branch. June 17.

Paul Littlewood, Cook. HMS Illustrious V 1982-84.

Stanley E Croft Ordinary Seaman. HMS Illustrious IV 1946-47. August 7.

Algerines Association

Frederick W H Lack, LRM PO RN. HMS Hound, Clinton 1946-7. September 6.

Sub Lt John D Sanders. HMS Pelorus, Pickle, 1944-5. Aged 91.

Stanley Davies, L.Wmn. HMS Hound 1943-4. September 6.

Geoffrey Hunt SBA. HMS Niger 1946-7. September 29.

Ask Jack

Chathams Barracks, New Entry S2/Sand/S Division April 22 1958. Trevor Heath of Droitwich has kept in touch with one other but would like to contact others he joined with. Tel: 01905 795721.

HMS Dundas ship's plaque. Terry 'Happy' Day is looking to purchase an original HMS Dundas ship's plaque (not the modern type). If you have one and it wouldn't break your heart to say goodbye to it, please contact Terry at firefighter253@sky.com or telephone 07729 707129.

Sports Lottery

October 15: £5,000 – Mne T Simmons £1,800 – Sgt R Lewis; £800 – PO M Dent; £600 – Cpl J Hitchcough; £500 – LH L Glover; £400 – Mne D May.

October 22: £5,000 – AB1 T Bolaitama; £1,800 – WO1 L Hendrickson; £800 – LH M Leary; £600 – LH C Lingwood; £500 – Mne R Dyer; £400 – AB J McCleester.

Talking Navy News

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 07770 088388 and leave a message, or email geoff.prentice@virginmedia.com

May 2017

HMS Tenby Association. Reunion at Llandudno from May 12-15. All those who served in the other DTS ships as well as Tenby are most welcome. Contact the secretary at hms_tenby@hotmail.co.uk

HMS Hecate South Atlantic Deployment. 35th anniversary reunion in Weymouth (venue tbc) from May 12-15. Contact Colin Bodenham for details at cbo@btconnect.com or on 07955 669393.

OCAAA reunion to take place from May 5-7 May at the Marriott Hotel in York. Further details from Secretary Phillip Alder at sec.ocaaa@yahoo.co.uk

Entries for the Deaths and Reunions columns, and for Swap Drafts, in January's Noticeboard must be received by December 5

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY, or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
- Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.
- Please send in Reunions at least two months (preferably three) before the month of the event.
- There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.
- Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.
- The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.
- Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.



DEPOETs society

THESE are the first four senior rates to undergo the transformation from civilians to petty officers as part of a direct entry scheme to attract skilled engineers from civvy street.

Four recruits with previous technical knowledge and experience made the transition from civilian to sailor with the rank of DE Petty Officer Engineering Technician (Marine Engineering) (DEPOET(ME)).

After initially expressing an interest in joining the Royal Navy, each of the quartet went through a special programme at the Admiralty Interview Board at HMS Sultan to assess their suitability to become marine engineers in the Service.

From there the trainees went on to Raleigh for the ten-week basic course every rating must go through to learn what it is to be a sailor, followed by a spot of sea survival training.

Then it was back to Sultan for more technical, management and administration training before the inaugural four are assigned to either Type 23s or Type 45s.

DEPOET(ME) Matt Goodman (on the far right of PO(Phot) Nicola Harper's picture) is drafted to frigate HMS Somerset. The 36-year-old worked all over the world as a maintenance engineer and electrician on oil rigs before joining the RN.

"I'm enjoying being part of the Navy, it just seems to tick all the right boxes and I've enjoyed it all so far," he said.

"It's opened my mind up to a lot of different things and hopefully I will get to see the other half of the world that I didn't see when I was working on oil rigs.

"I'm still a little bit nervous about going up the gangway for the first time, but everybody will be. My family are really proud to see me pass out; it's a big thing for them and for me."

Matt continued: "All four of us are from different backgrounds and I never thought I would do this, but now I am I'm really happy. It's been novel for many of the Petty Officers who have seen us around the place, but the feedback has been really positive.

"The pilot course has been good; it teaches you about management and safety, we've been able to learn in simulators and have also spent time on HMS Bristol doing some hands-on modules, plus we will carry on the learning experience at sea."



Sultan keeps trim

THIS might look like matelots negotiating a rope bridge on an assault course... but it's actually matelots negotiating a rope bridge on a trim trail (which is a low-level assault course).

Sailors at Sultan now have a new course to negotiate to keep themselves fit, thanks to cash from a string of RN funds (RNRMC, RNRM Sports Lottery and Rebalancing Lives).

A course was built at the Gosport base back in 2010 but has since been worn out due to heavy use,

The replacement, which features 14 obstacles designed to get the whole body moving, has a life span of ten years and will be used by Sultan's clubz to set both individual and team challenges for setting the fastest times each term.

"The Trim Trail is a low-level assault course that you can challenge individuals and teams of six to run around. Obstacles range from the monkey bars through to a wooden escalator and the aim really is to get around the course as quickly as you can," explained CPO(PTI) Lee Derbyshire.

Picture: PO(Phot) Nicola Harper, HMS Sultan

ME and WE success

THREE hundred better motivated and more experienced weapon and marine engineers have joined ships across the Fleet in the first 18 months of the Engineering Training Squadrons (ETS)..

The squadrons were set up in Devonport and Portsmouth in early 2015 to continue the professional and personal development of weapon/marine engineers following their training at Collingwood and Sultan.

The squadrons deliver tailored generic engineering employment at sea and ashore – offering the chance to go to sea, see the world, and do real ‘hands on’ engineering with engines, circuitry, weapons or radar systems – exactly what engineers join the RN to do.

On average an ET spends between three and six months at a squadron – three months at sea onboard a ship, during which they work in all sections of their relevant engineering department, working alongside the ship's company.

In addition they are coached and mentored by an ETS senior rate, who gives them the knowledge, skills and experience to complete their Career Development Journals (they replace taskbooks) and thus reach their early career milestones.

Within their 12 weeks sea time, over 90 per cent of WEs advance to ET(WE)1 and three quarters of MEs to ET(ME)1 Sea 1 (an ET is permitted 26 weeks to achieve this) – rapid career progression whilst increasing the pay of the individual. This ‘soft start’ to an ET’s early years offers evidence as the benefits of coaching and mentoring by the ETS in the flotillas.

Following their time in the ETS, an ET joins the flotillas more experienced and motivated than if they hadn’t joined the ETS, which in turn reduces the training required from busy operational units.

The proof of concept was delivered on the WE and ME promotion signals in Oct 16; both had ETs selected for leading hand who were part of the first ETS embarks in 2015.

Downstream, work continues to determine how engineers progress in the years immediately after their time with ETS, and monitoring any impact on the retention of our engineers.

The squadron's Officer in Charge, Lt Andrew Webster, certainly believes the RN in general benefits.

"When engineers leave us and go on draft to their first ship, the ships are receiving a better 'product' – men and women who've greater understanding of life at sea, who are more motivated and who are better qualified," he says.

"We are delivering on the vision the Royal Navy sells our



● Sailors from Portsmouth's ETS join HMS Dauntless for their initial training and (right) ET(ME) Calvin Jones – part of the initial tranche of ETS trainees in Devonport, now serving aboard HMS Ocean – shows ET(ME) Kiera-Ann Parry the sewage control panel on the Mighty O

people – hands-on practical engineering, whilst enjoying life as a sailor and engineer at sea. Equally, the ships are receiving a better engineer – enthused and motivated men and women who have greater understanding of life at sea, and who are better qualified and require less training to integrate with their new ships," he says.

At any one time, a Squadron manages between 30 and 100 ETs. Members of the Portsmouth squadron undergo initial training in HMS Dauntless, before getting sea time in HMS Dragon (WEs) and HMS Richmond (MEs).

Devonport embarks are currently aboard HMS Ocean on the flagship's Mediterranean and Middle East deployment.

"As a department, we've benefited from the ETS programme. After the first tranche embarked we were able to retain six of the 14 and when they joined they were already harbour-qualified," said CPOET(ME) Greig Gunning. "This instantly eases the burden on the harbour watchkeepers and enhances the roster after carrying gaps. The attitude of the ETS personnel is still evident onboard with three of the six qualifying for sea watchkeeping in a short space of time. The ETS scheme gives them the initial tools to learn



systems and basic engineering so that when they join their next units they can easily put this into practice."

His boss, Cdr Mike Thompson, said that hosting "focussed and bright individuals" had created "a positive training environment" throughout the carrier's marine engineering department.

"Sections have enjoyed the additional manpower resulting in the ETS being engaged in real engineering challenges from the outset. From the individual's perspective, they have been immersed in life onboard an operational warship, including amphibious exercises, runs ashore and – for the 'lucky ones' – FOST-directed continuation

training...

"The results have been tangible and it has been pleasing to see a large number of our ETS volunteering to return to Ocean to continue with their careers."

ET(WE) Tom Cope spent eight weeks working in various sections aboard Ocean and four on board HMS Somerset. "My knowledge of the WE department has grown massively and I feel a lot more confident and ready to join my next ship as an ET(WE)1. The ship's companies were great and very welcoming – our first time at sea was made so much easier. Our ETS trainer helped us throughout – explaining all the basics of life at sea and as an engineer."

Where to look

O be joyful as squadron's new HQ opens

THE nation's most senior Royal Marine formally opened the new headquarters building from where green berets perform their most important duty.

General Sir Gordon Messenger, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, was invited to the Clyde to look around and then unveil the commemorative plaque at Harvey VC Building, the new home of 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group's O Squadron... the men who safeguard the nation's nuclear deterrent.

It's down to the squadron to stop any unauthorised access to the UK's nuclear weapons – be they carried by the four Vanguard-class submarines based at Faslane, or held in the specialist ammunition facility at nearby Coulport.

It's taken two years to build the new complex which features improved facilities so the squadron can carry out its specialist security duties, plus new accommodation and dining areas, and improved IT for training and education. The complex has been designed with input from 43 Cdo personnel.

The new building takes its name from Major Francis Harvey, a Royal Marine officer in command of Q Turret on battle-cruiser HMS Lion at Jutland.

When the turret was wrecked by a German shell and the ensuing fire threatened to reach the magazine, the mortally-wounded Royal Marine ordered it flooded. His actions prevented Lion blowing up – a fate which three other battle-cruisers sadly suffered during the battle in near identical circumstances.

Choirs' Xmas No.1 bid

PORTSMOUTH Military Wives Choir feature in the Military Wives Choir's Christmas album.

With 65 participating choirs, *Home for Christmas* is the Military Wives Choir's biggest project yet. The choirs, comprising 1,006 singers, can all be heard on the title track and the album also features six classic carols.

For details visit www.militarywiveschoirs.org.

DIN

2016DIN10-041 - Royal Navy Alpine Championships 2017

2016DIN01-166 - Manning Priorities for the Naval Service

2016DIN04-189 - Correct use of The Advanced Respirator Test System (ARTS) and guidance on the purchase of permanent ARTS (P-ARTS) facilities.

DIB

2016DIB/30 - New Employment Model (NEM): Officers' Talent Management

RNTM

RNTM 335/16 - Financial Approval Process For Ceremonial Gifting (High Level Gifting)

RNTM 329/16 - Naval Careers Service (Ncs) - Entry Criteria

RNTM 326/16 - Dare To Be An Innovation Advocate

RNTM 321/16 - Desmond Wettern RN Media Award 2016

Galaxy

17-2016 – A Better Defence Estate

Just the FACS

URGENT Operational Requirements (UOR) from Operation Herrick have provided a hitherto unprecedented additional range of aircrew clothing options which have proved both reliable and popular with our communities.

The drawback, however, is that not all of these items are available for day-to-day non-operational use and, since the advent of the Future Aircrew Clothing System (FACS), they are not supported by a through-life maintenance plan.

For the first time, legacy UOR clothing meant there was consistency between aircrew and ground forces' clothing – a recurring key requirement in almost all stakeholder reviews and a necessity for the future option.

With several of the current aircrew clothing contracts due for renewal it was the perfect opportunity for a wholesale review; the stage was set for FACS to gain traction and deliver the next generation of aircrew clothing.

FACS has been developed with extensive user input as a single concept but in two key areas: a traditional green flying coverall and a two-piece MTP variant.

Both take advantage of the latest research data and testing facilities (particularly burns testing) to produce an ALARP solution in terms of flame retardancy and thermal performance.

Accompanying this outer layer will be a range of additional base and mid-layer garments (but not new gloves or boots just yet) to form a 12-piece ensemble that can be worn in a layering configuration or as stand-alone items. These multiple options will serve to maximise crew protection and optimise crew comfort whilst delivering the required safety performance. The research, analysis and design has been almost entirely completed in-house using aircrew from the front-line commands and across the (generous) anthropometric range (#rmfact – there are 35 different sizes of trouser to choose from, so double duffers or salad warriors, we've got your back).

Other significant additions to FACS will see a FR moisture vapour permeable rain suit for rotary and C130 rear crews, MTP trousers with built-in kneepads for rotary rear crews and a smock with poacher's pockets and common sleeve layouts with interchangeable pen pockets to cater for left and right handers.

The roll-out plan began in February and concluded at Yeovilton in July. A team from AES visited every unit across all five front-line commands; the background and user information has been briefed to the user community. FACS is already being used both at home and on operations and it is expected that by autumn all entitled users will be operating in FACS.

Legacy flying clothing is fully compatible with

I THINK WE CAN TURN IT DOWN A BIT FOR THE NEXT TEST, CHAPS!!



FACS with one exception – legacy underwear can be worn with FACS garments but FACS underwear cannot be used with legacy garments. Once FACS is fully integrated the legacy flying clothing items will be withdrawn from stock but this is unlikely to commence before February or March next year.

FACS represents the very latest in design technology to improve utility, durability and protection. Capitalising on end-of-life contracts, using emerging technology to our advantage and engaging with the user community has allowed the next generation of aircrew clothing to move from concept to production in a commendably short space of time. The enduring theme in the design of FACS has been user input; we have canvassed our aircrew community – male, female, front, and rear crew to tell us what they need their clothing ensemble to do and we are confident you will not be disappointed.

Further information is available from the Aircrew Escape and Survival RM – Maj Maz Wood, 9679 82901.

Your questions, our answers

Naval Families Federation

IT'S been another busy and interesting month here at the Naval Families Federation with plenty of thought-provoking questions from you such as:

My wife and I, with our children, live in Portsmouth, where we have always lived. I have now received my next draft to Plymouth, but would like to retain our current quarter (SFA) as we have a good family and friends support network around us. Can the NFF clarify that we can remain in Portsmouth?

The Joint Service Publications JSP 464 part 1, chapter 7, section 1V 0707 states that SFA can be retained under the Home Port Agreement. Personnel are advised to check if their circumstances meet the criteria. Serving personnel should apply for retention of Service Family Accommodation on assignment via c1132 on the MOD intranet.

What is the routine that should be followed for ordering furniture items for Service Family Accommodation?

Occupants of Service Family Accommodation may request furniture such as beds, chests of drawers, ironing boards, dining table and chairs. Occupants should complete a furniture request form from CarillionAmey (www.carillionamey.co.uk – under the Service Family Accommodation tab), and send to furniturerequests@

carillionamey.co.uk. Applicants will receive an automated response confirming receipt and then be contacted directly to arrange delivery.

I've my own home in northern England but spend most of my time with my unit. On reading an article in the summer edition of *Homeport* on Job Related Council Tax Discount (page 26), I now wonder if I'm eligible for the 50 per cent discount as I am not in the property much due to living with my unit which is job-related.

In these circumstances serving personnel would need to contact the relevant council and confirm their eligibility, based on their individual personal circumstances, before applying for a job-related discount. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/council-tax-information-letter-service-personnel-and-the-empty-second-homes-job-related-discount>

states that Service personnel may provide copies of their Posting Notice and/or the MOD Licence to Occupy as evidence that a

particular dwelling satisfies the relevant job-related definition.

It is for billing authorities to consider Service personnel's particular circumstances and evidence. However, if an authority is satisfied that the relevant exception provisions are met, the 50 per cent empty homes discount applies. Continue to contact us with your feedback/questions: email contactus@nff.org.uk, on social media; or call 023 9265 4374.

PIETY and half-time pies...

SAILORS from HMS Raleigh helped foster closer relations with the local Muslim population courtesy of a spot of footy.

The Torpoint establishment hosted a five-a-side contest for recruits, PT staff and members of Plymouth Islamic Education Trust (PIETY).

The sailors won the round-robin contest with a goal five seconds from time in the final to clinch a 3-2 triumph.

WelComE

WELFARE

Your WelComE account card...

A WelComE account card is assigned to you for your entire military career and can be used to access telephone and Internet services whilst deployed.

You should receive it after basic training. If you haven't been given it, speak to your admin officer. For more information visit: www.mywelcome.co.uk

Lost your account card? No worries! Speak to your admin officer who will be able to provide you with your WelComE account number and a password to reset your PIN.

WelComE Customer Contact Centre
customer.support@mywelcome.co.uk | www.mywelcome.co.uk

WelComE
Welfare Communications Everywhere

REWARDING JOB VACANCIES IN RECRUITING

Apply to become a Careers Adviser

Flag Officer Sea Training is currently seeking RN and RM WO's, Senior Rates and SNCO Service Leavers and former Service (those that left Service under 2 years), to work in Armed Forces Careers Officers around the UK, as listed on the map.

Employment is on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) (NCS) Limited Commitment.

Salary starts from £29k with promotion opportunities to rise to £41k.

FTRS rates of pay apply (Reviewed annually and pensionable).

For more information contact:

PSTN- 01929 403172 Mil 94374 3172

E-mail-

navycnr-rnsrtrainingassist@mod.uk



Treat for URNU recruits

THE first of the New Entry Weekends for University Royal Naval Units took place at Britannia Royal Naval College.

The weekends offer a first experience of the Royal Navy for first-year undergraduates.

During the course of two days the OCs from up to four different URNUs were split into mixed unit divisions so they got a chance to work with students.

It was the first time the OCs wore Royal Navy uniform and they were inspected by their Commanding Officers each morning.

Their programme consisted of the Royal Navy Military Swim Test, which they must pass to go to sea in P2000 boats, practical leadership tasks, team-building exercises and parade training with the drill team from BRNC.

Lt Alex Kelley, the CO of Wales URNU, said: "This is such a great weekend for the students as they get to stay at Britannia Royal Naval College, the home of the Royal Navy's officer training, and start developing their teamwork and leadership skills whilst having fun."

There are 15 URNUs which recruit from a number of different universities every September, who train a range of undergraduates in leadership, seamanship and navigation without any obligation to join the Royal Navy.

For further information visit <http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/news-and-latest-activity/operations/uk-home-waters/university-training>

Running for Simon

A GROUP of serving and ex-Royal Marines took on an incredible feat of endurance in memory of a friend.

Lt Col Simon Gray passed away at Hospiscare in Exeter in July this year following a long battle with cancer.

"Simon was a real inspiration to his friends, his colleagues and to those he commanded," said Michael Payne who, along with Matthew Parker, organised an 180-mile run for Royal Marines and friends from Simon's parents' home in Worcester to his home in Devon, where he lived with wife Emma and their two daughters.

"Everyone at Hospiscare was amazing and they have been a huge support to our family," said Emma Gray. "They held our hands for over two and a half years, from Simon's diagnosis at the end of December 2013 and throughout his illness."

"What most people don't realise is that Hospiscare is not just somewhere people go to die. It is a place that supports an individual to live their life as well as possible in difficult circumstances."

So far the event has raised more than £10,000 for Hospiscare. You can still donate by visiting justgiving.com/fundraising/Home-to-Home-H2H

Fitness feast

ROYAL Navy personnel based at HMS Raleigh have been reminded of the benefits of a good diet, regular health checks and exercise.

The training base in Torpoint staged a healthy lifestyle event in the gymnasium, with experts on hand to offer advice.

Staff and trainees from the Defence Maritime Logistics School brought along some healthy eating salad options and a Thai Green Curry and spoke of the benefits of home cooking.



Check this out...

WE DON'T normally publish cheque presentations but thought we would make an exception for the 37 good causes who shared £25,000 from the HMS Sultan summer show.

Each received their donations from the CO of the base Capt Peter Towell and Gosport MP Caroline Dinenage.

Beneficiaries included the Mayor of Gosport's Charity Appeal and to mark the base's 60 years as a centre of excellence

for engineering, a donation was also made to Brune Park School's LEGO Education Innovation Studio for budding engineers.

Recipients of the charity chest also included: 1st Alverstoke Guide Unit, 1st Gosport Scouts, 5th Gosport Sea Scouts, HMS Sultan Volunteer Cadet Corps, Alverstoke Church of England School's swimming pool fund, Brockhurst Junior School, Leesland School's swimming pool fund, Rowner Junior School, Brodrick Hall Alverstoke Appeal, Gosport Marine Scene, Gosport District Explorer

Scouts, Hannah Potter – Friends of Malawi, Harbour Cancer Support Centre, Haslar Bosom Buddies, Kids Family Centre at Fareham, Gosport Stroke Club, Children's Honey Pot Bus, Family Aid, Loud and Proud, Portsmouth Down Syndrome Association, The Provincial Society, Gosport Shed, Radio Haslar, Rowans Hospice, Stubbington Stroke Group, Suki Aerobics Gymnastics Club, Sultan Central Amenities Fund, Sultan Local Pensioners' Christmas Lunch, Sultan Steam Lorry, Gosport Opensight Club, Marine Engineering Museum, Naomi House.

Pilots mark 2,000 hours in the skies

Toughest of tests

TEN sailors from HMS Westminster completed the Great South Run to raise £370 to help vulnerable young people.

The ship's company took their place alongside 20,000 other runners in the annual ten-mile (16km) slog through the streets of Portsmouth.

First across the line for Westminster in 1h 16m 56s was Sub Lt Simon Priestley – particularly impressive as he was refereeing a tough rugby fixture 24 hours earlier – while his XO Lt Cdr Chris L'Amie posted an admirable time of 1h 25m 47s.

"It was quite a tough race, but everyone gave it their all," said Chris. "I'm really proud of everyone for all their efforts, both in fundraising and in the race itself."

Leap is a youth charity which provides conflict management training to vulnerable young people aged 11-25 who have been excluded from school, are involved with social services or are in prison.

The charity also trains teachers, prison officers, youth workers and other professionals.

"We're hugely grateful to all the sailors who ran on our behalf – and in such good times too," said Leap's chief executive Thomas Lawson.

"The money they raised will help us to continue supporting young people to turn their lives around."



King Mk3, this time in a search-and-rescue role at RAF Valley, flying the Griffin HT1 before moving across to the yellow Sea King MK3 in August 2012. He was then posted to RAF Boulmer, completing 74 rescue missions both in the UK and in the Falkland Islands.

August 2015 saw Lt Kerr move to RAF Shawbury to complete the QHI course and on completion he was posted to 660 AAC.

He lives on base with his wife Amy and two children, Matthew, four, and Alice, two.

Lt Suckling was assigned to

829 NAS as a small ship's flight pilot. During 3½ years on the squadron he completed numerous deployments, detachments, exercises and trials flying; the longest deployment being eight months at sea resulting in three piracy takedowns and two narcotics boardings.

During this time he served in Type 23 frigates HMS St Albans, Sutherland, Westminster, Kent and Northumberland as well as Type 45 destroyer HMS Dauntless.

He then joined 814 NAS for 18 months, converting to the Merlin Mk2 and was largely deployed for the first 12 months to the Middle East.

He then went to Sicily and embarked in HMS Bulwark conducting search-and-rescue operations in the Mediterranean.

Assigned to 369 QHI course at RAF Shawbury in August 2015, he completed the course and graduated in January 2016 before being assigned to 660 Sqn AAC as a QHI.

Field fun with Marines



PUPILS at Plymouth school enjoyed a taste of life with the Royal Marines.

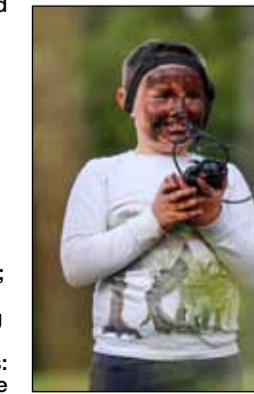
Tasting ration packs, camouflaging their faces and trying out the communications equipment were the highlights of a sleepover.

Marines from 30 Commando at Stonehouse visited nearby St George's Primary School to showcase their survival skills.

The visit was organised by the city's Forest School, an educational organisation dedicated to providing a safe outdoor environment for children to play, explore and enjoy nature's playground.

Pictured are, clockwise from top, pupils trying out the contents of a typical ration pack; Sgt Armitage shows Zaac his camouflage cream; Zaac uses a personal radio kit while wearing camouflage cream

Pictures: LPhot Joel Rouse



Sea lessons for pupils

SAILORS from Portsmouth-based Type 23 frigate HMS St Albans visited Solent Infant School in Farlington to tell pupils what it's like to live and work on board a Royal Navy warship.

The children have been learning about all things maritime in a topic called Ahoy There and were keen to hear about the Royal Navy directly from the experts.

Pupils heard about the Navy's role providing security at sea, the fight against modern day smugglers and pirates and how the crew are trained to fight fires on board.

As more than 35 of its pupils come from Service families the school has developed close links with the Navy in recent years.

The ship took the relationship further, by inviting the school teddy bear Hoggee to join the 220 crew on their recent nine-month deployment to the Middle East – sending back regular photos of the bear with stories of the ships travels.

Lt Cdr Jamie Walker, who organised the visit, is the ship's Marine Engineering Officer and proud dad to six-year old Orin, a year two pupil at the school.

"I sent regular email updates to Orin's class whilst we were away so it's been great to meet some of the children who followed our travels and re-unite Hoggee bear with his class-mates," he said.

The crew took along Naval uniform and fire-fighting kit for the children to try out.

Honour for work helping migrants



Looking before they leap

RUN the Rock? No, that's too easy. Let's leapfrog our way up instead – all 424 metres of it.

Thirty-one sailors from HMS Diamond set themselves the challenge of ascending the Rock of Gibraltar to raise funds for the Hosanna House Children's Pilgrimage Trust.

The Warrant Officers and Senior Rates were cheered at the start by Diamond's CO Cdr Marcus Hember and Commander British Forces Gibraltar Cdre Michael Walliker.

The team reached the summit in a mere one hour and 15 minutes – and raised at least £2,000.

Pictures: Cpl Tim Hammond RAF



Deep resurfaces for garden

ROYAL Navy CPO John Robb is calling time on his career beneath the waves to start a new life in the great outdoors.

CPO Robb joined the Royal Navy in 1978 aged 16, and is now retiring to Spain after 38 years in uniform.

He is currently working as a Divisional Officer at HMS Raleigh looking after the welfare of recruits undergoing their specialist submarine training as well as building manager.

CPO Robb has served on four diesel submarines as well as HMS Turbulent, Victorious, twice, and Vengeance.

In total he has spent approximately 5,000 days submerged.

He said: "My early days on the diesel submarines was every teenager's dream. We went everywhere and did everything."



I tell people that being on a submarine is a bit like being in a car, but you haven't got windows. People also ask if it's claustrophobic, but I think that's

all in the head. The countries I've visited have been among the highlights. The only place I haven't been to is Australia."

Ashore CPO Robb has served on the staff of Flag Officer Sea Training on two occasions, at HMS Raleigh as an instructor at the Royal Navy Submarine School and in Naples.

He said: "My current job is very rewarding. In general it's good to be helping the recruits along.

"I've had a great career overall. I've not ever had a bad time or not enjoyed a draft. I'll certainly miss the people and the banter, but it is now time to leave."

In his new life CPO Robb intends to make the most of the outdoors in a sunny climate and is looking forward to enjoying his retirement cycling and growing fruit and vegetables on his land.

A ROYAL Navy medic who led a team helping migrants in the Aegean Sea has been honoured with an OBE.

Surgeon Commander Matthew Turner, 44, led a medical team onboard the UK Border Force-chartered ship MV Vos Grace between November 2015 and January this year.

The ship was helping patrol the narrow waters between Turkey and the Greek islands as migrants sought to make the dangerous crossing.

Cdr Turner's citation said he "demonstrated leadership and professionalism of the highest order, in isolation and in an extremely challenging environment under very difficult circumstances. His fortitude in the face of a terrible humanitarian disaster has been acknowledged as exemplary."

The medic, who hails from Somerset, said: "I am absolutely amazed and humbled to have been awarded an OBE."

"In 21 years as a doctor and 12 as a Royal Navy Medical Officer, this was the single biggest challenge I have had to face but, with the amazing support of my fellow medics and Royal Marines, we managed to achieve an incredible result.

"With my small team we managed to help over 5,000 migrants, including several who were critically ill.

"This honour represents the work of the entire team and also the huge support from all our



friends and family who kept us going through the difficult times whilst deployed."

Surg Cdr Turner, who is based at RNAS Yeovilton, was deployed to an unfamiliar vessel and worked with limited resources.

He said a number of migrants rescued were suffering from various illnesses but his medical team ensured they were all shown compassion and sensitivity.

Surg Cdr Turner's normal day job is as Principal Medical Officer for Yeovilton, ensuring the 2,000-plus military personnel are fighting fit.

Away from work he is kept busy with his menagerie of animals, which includes six dogs, two cats, two pigs, 17 ducks and a rabbit.

"I love living in Somerset, especially surrounded by cider orchards," he added.

Hot stuff for fireworks night

HMS Sultan opened for an evening of spectacular entertainment at the annual bonfire and fireworks night.

Thousands of people headed to Gosport to enjoy one of the south's largest fireworks display, accompanied by a musical soundtrack.

As well as the main display,

guests also enjoyed seeing fire breathers, entertainers, a funfair and a traditional bonfire.

Captain Peter Towell, the Commanding Officer of HMS Sultan, said: "My personal thanks go not only to the team who have organised the event, but also to everyone who has come along to support us."

Supporting Children

of Royal Navy and Royal Marines
(serving and ex-serving)
who are IN NEED, HARSHSHIP
or DISTRESS



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E: rnchchildren@btconnect.com
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Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

Charity registration No. 1160182

The only charity dedicated to supporting children whose parents work, or who have worked in the Naval Service



● Navy personnel applaud the cyclists as they arrive in London

Talent riders in race against time for Joe

A TEAM of six cyclists from Royal Navy submarine HMS Talent rode from Plymouth to London in a race against time and to raise funds in memory of a colleague.

Plymouth-based sailors CPOs Craig Parker, Scott Yeardale, Matthew Bradley and WO Jimmy Dyke and AB Aidan Madden and LH Matty Mead covered the 248 miles in less than 23 hours.

They raised funds for the RNRMC. The charity supported the family of Lt Joseph Wright, 26, who died in January from natural causes after collapsing while out jogging in Faslane Naval Base, Scotland.

Event organiser Craig said: "I decided to arrange this event as I don't believe that the RNRMC get the acknowledgement they deserve. I was inspired by the amount of support they provided to the family and friends of the late Lt Joe Wright after his death and decided what better time of the year to do something to raise that awareness and remember Joe."

Craig manages radio and sonar engineers in HMS Talent and organises the weapon engineering department's training.

The ride finished at the Submarine Memorial on the Embankment during Submarine Memorial Weekend in London, where services were held at the memorial and Westminster Abbey to honour all who serve and have served in submarines.

Talent's CO Martin Gill said: "The RNRMC exists to support sailors, marines and their families and makes a difference to thousands of people."

"It was great to be able to support the HMS Talent guys as they prepared for their cycle ride to London in order to raise money for the charity. I hope others will join in the support by donating to this very worthy cause."

Jimmy, an engineer, said: "I offered my support for this ride because it is for a good cause."

Aidan added: "This is a very good cause and deserves the credit for what it gives back to its members. Another reason is the fact that after the ride I get to experience a brilliant parade."

To support the riders please consider donating by the following: text 'Navy talent' to 70500 to give £5 or donate online at virginmoneygiving.com/HMSTALENTbeatgooglecycle



Honneur honour for D-Day pals

IT'S nothing like a 15in...

HMS Westminster LET Ben Walton holds a shell from the RN's main gun for the past 35 years – the 4.5in – for D-Day veteran gunners Norman Burns (left) and Alfred 'Alfie' Booker.

On June 6 1944 – and for some time after – their ship, battleship HMS Ramillies, pummelled Hitler's Atlantic Wall and the defences beyond with 15in shells. Indeed, no Allied warship laid down a more ferocious barrage against German positions during the liberation of France than Ramillies.

More than seven decades later, the former shipmates were reunited aboard the frigate to receive France's highest honour, the *Legion d'Honneur*, for their part in freeing the country from Nazi tyranny... and for a combined birthday party organised by the RNRMC.

Both former sailors wanted to mark their 90th birthdays in style and the wardroom of the Portsmouth-based Type 23 obliged by hosting a tip-top lunch... with CO Cdr Simon Kelly serving the drinks.

Norman, who lives in Bournemouth, and Alfie from Lichfield, met each other as trainee gunners on the Revenge-class battleship at the age of just 17.

Ramillies was sent to support the Allied invasion first of northern France – her guns were used to subdue the German battery guarding Sword Beach, knocked out in the first 80 minutes of the invasion.

After her stint on the gunline in Normandy, the veteran man o'war moved to the Mediterranean to pound German guns defending Toulon during the operation to liberate southern and central France.

Put in reserve at the beginning of 1945, Ramillies was broken up post-war, although one of her 15in gun barrels was salvaged and now greets visitors to

the Imperial War Museum in London.

Accompanied by their wives, Betty and Bronwyn, the veterans regaled HMS Westminster's crew with other wartime dits, occasionally breaking out into song – including the Vera Lynn classic *We'll Meet Again* – before being awarded their medals.

Among the more unusual tales the two former shipmates vividly remember is Ramillies' slightly eccentric commanding officer, Capt Gervese Middleton, who wore a *piupiu* (a Maori grass skirt) throughout the two invasion operations as a good luck charm (it evidently worked, for the battleship came through both operations virtually unscathed).

Alfie's son Murray said his father thoroughly enjoyed the occasion – and appreciated the hospitality shown by today's Senior Service.

"Everybody on Westminster really played their part in making their birthday celebrations more than special. This is something that we will remember for the rest of our lives," he said. "Lunch in the wardroom was something special, especially when the captain served us drinks."

Cdr Kelly said: "It's an absolute honour to present the *Legion d'Honneur* to two of the nation's Royal Navy veterans. They are a true inspiration for today's serving sailors. They have certainly inspired the crew here on HMS Westminster."

Lauren Kempston, RNRMC human resources officer, said that although reunions were not typically part of her charity's day-to-day work, on this occasion, it was happy to oblige.

"The fact that Norman and Alfie are still friends 73 years since they met as trainee gunners on HMS Ramillies is inspirational. I feel lucky and proud to have been a part of their birthday celebrations," she said.

Fancy way to help

PERSONNEL from HMS Sultan took part in the establishment's Trafalgar Day 5km fun run to raise money for the RNRMC.

Mummies, Sumo wrestlers and the Three Amigos were among the 500 runners who ran around the technical side of the base on a course which included a 130ft inflatable and an off-road trek round Fort Rowner.

Throughout the year trainee engineering technicians compete in multiple sports within the HMS Sultan Engineers Trophy.

With points towards the trophy up for grabs once more, the first 40 trainees to cross the line were tallied to see which school performed the stronger – and the Marine Engineers claimed victory.

AET Emily Newton came in as the fastest female on the day,

completing the course in just 17 minutes and 28 seconds.

She said: "This is the first time I've done this run as I missed it when I was here last. The first obstacle especially was pretty challenging – it was not what I was expecting. I was struggling to get through some of the gaps and there were a lot of the guys out there who are a lot bigger than I am."

"It's a great event and it's a great turn-out – there's an awful lot of people who chose to come along and give it a go."

Event organiser LPT Joe Collin said: "The Trafalgar Fun Run has been lots of fun to organise. There have been some excellent fancy dress costumes and everyone has really bought in to the event to help support the RNRMC."

Festive music

A CD featuring music by HM Royal Marines Band Portsmouth has been released this month to raise funds for Cruse Bereavement Care and the RNRMC.

Jubilation Christmas Special also includes guest vocalists such as Welsh tenor Wynne Evans, soprano Emily Haig and Pilgrims Pre-Prep School Choir.

The album is available on iTunes as well as on Amazon.

Marathon money

THE RNRMC and RNAS Yeovilton Military Wives Choir shared £5,000 raised from the Yeovil Marathon.

RNAS Yeovilton's sports fund also received £250 from Yeovil Town Road Running Club.

Entries are open for next year's marathon on June 11 – see www.yeovilmarathon.com

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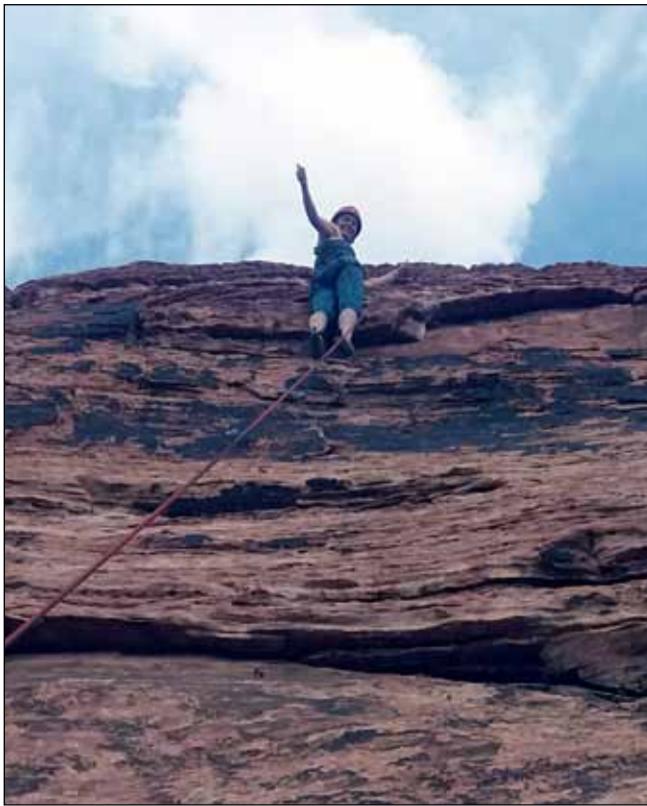
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From ER to AT

THIS, obviously, is a Naval medical exercise.

Well, actually it's the fun bit at the end of a naval medical exercise.

LNN Fiona Simkins leans on a rope as she climbs a sheer face in Red Rock Canyon near Las Vegas – one of the AT rewards for full and spare-time Naval medics who joined their American counterparts on Exercise Integrated Serpent.

The 200 Brits – drawn from the RNR, 203 (Welsh) Field Hospital, and 202 (Midlands) Field Hospital – were invited to join the US Navy at Camp Pendleton (between LA and San Diego).

The UK group of reservist and regular medical personnel built and equipped a tented hospital at the US Navy Expeditionary Medical Training Institute.



Nine get up early in deepest Devon

DAWN over Dartmouth – and nine RNR Officer Cadets stand on the parade ground at Britannia Royal Naval College with their kit ready for a leadership exercise alongside their regular counterparts.

The cadets signed up for the Reserves around nine months ago and their 16 days spent at the college forms part of their induction training.

During that time, they complete their Royal Navy Fitness Test, the Military Swim Test, acquire a motor whaler coxswain qualification and enjoy strategic studies and leadership lectures in the build-up to the epic five-day basic military skills package that culminates in their all-important leadership assessments.

Then they put the hospital to work dealing with simulated casualties from burns victims to those caught in bomb blasts, alongside colleagues from the US Navy.

"The exercise was fantastic," said Fiona, normally based at HMS Ceres in Leeds.

"We integrated well and learned how to deal with a challenging environment."

After the exercise participants had the opportunity to try challenging adventurous training activities: rock climbing, trail walking, kayaking on the Colorado River, and mountain biking.

"AT was a fantastic way to see Nevada and Arizona, good for team building, and an amazing way to see a different country," Fiona added.



Bandies' birthday a big Deal

NEVER one to give photographers an easy ride – even at the age of 95 – the Duke of Edinburgh allowed just seconds for this group shot to be taken of the men and women of the Royal Marines School of Music.

Which probably explains the smiles and smirks on a good few faces – not least the Corps' Captain General, who visited the school to mark the 20th anniversary of the move to its current home... and the 352nd birthday of the Royal Marines themselves.

Prince Philip met some of the musicians and buglers undergoing musical instruction – they've already gone through 15 weeks of military training by the time they arrive at the school.

In all it takes two years and eight months to train a musician and two years for a bugler before they take their place in one of the Royal Marines' five bands.

The duke spoke to some of the trainee musicians and instructors and viewed the Royal Marines Band Service Memorial Room

before closing his visit by unveiling a plaque to commemorate the anniversary of the school moving to Portsmouth Naval Base from Deal in Kent and cutting a 352nd birthday cake.

"It was an unforgettable experience and a privilege to meet the Duke of Edinburgh," said 19-year-old Ms Harry Yarnell, who plays the clarinet and viola.

"He was interested to know what led me to choosing a career in the Royal Marines Band Service, the training process at the school, how we develop as musicians, and what the future holds."

Lt Col Nick Grace, Principal Director of Music of the Royal Marines Band Service, added: "The visit provided a terrific opportunity for our trainees to speak to His Royal Highness and for them to appreciate how military music has played an important role in his life and the esteem in which he holds the Royal Marines Band Service."

Picture: LPhot Iggy Roberts

Centenary marked with book

THE Royal Star & Garter Homes has produced a special centenary book encapsulating its 100-year history, thanks to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Stories of courage and determination from the last century have been illustrated through photos, sketches and letters.

The book features stories such as The Flying Squad, whose customised motorised wheelchairs were a familiar sight around Richmond Hill.

Famous visitors to the home, such as the Royal Family and flying ace Douglas Bader, are also represented, as are the endeavours of disabled artists and sportsmen, and the heroic exploits of well-known residents such as the White Mouse of the French Resistance, Nancy Wake.

The book is also accessible online (www.starandgarter.org/centenary-book) and features in an exhibition at the Museum of Richmond, as part of the Royal Star & Garter Homes' centenary project.

Material from the book and historic artefacts associated with the Royal Star & Garter Homes will be displayed at an exhibition at the Museum of Richmond, The Royal Star & Garter: 100 Years of Care, which runs from this month to April 2017.

You've got to hand it to brave surfer Ben goes with floe



WINDSURFER Sub Lt Ben Easton becomes the most southerly windsurfer in the world.

The young officer from HMS Clyde braved the freezing waters of South Georgia in the Southern Atlantic to get on his plane.

Clyde was at anchor in Gold Harbour, having spent a few days visiting the remote islands, part of the continent of Antarctica.

Ben, who spent a few minutes in the water, couldn't wear gloves as it would hinder him trying to sort out the plane's rigging.

After his exploits he – and his plane – returned to Clyde, courtesy of the ship's seaboot.

■ Read about Clyde's latest work on Page 18





Abbie wins bursary

CADET First Class Abbie from Sutton Coldfield unit has been awarded the Gosling Foundation Bursary Award at the Annual National Service for Seafarers, which took place at St Paul's Cathedral in London, and was attended by the Princess Royal.

The bursary is an annual award that's presented to an outstanding musician in the Sea Cadet Corps and Abbie (pictured above, with Captain Sea Cadets Capt Phil Russell) has received £700 to go towards private music lessons.

She plays the piccolo to Grade 6 standard.

BTECs up for grabs

SEA Cadets and education charity CVQO teamed up for an awards evening at HMS President in London to celebrate the success of cadets.

A number of cadets received their BTEC Level 1 certificates from the Brigadier of the Worshipful Company of Leather Sellers, watched by Captain Sea Cadets Capt Phil Russell and Guy Horridge, CEO of CVQO.

The BTEC level 1 award for Teamwork, Personal Skills and Citizenship has been created by CVQO to provide learners from the age of 13 with the opportunity to gain a recognised BTEC qualification up to two years before taking GCSEs.

Cadets can receive this qualification by achieving the rank of Ordinary Cadet or RMC1, helping them gain a head start in life.



Dartmouth delivers

CADETS attending the annual summer camp gained a wide range of qualifications between them.

Out on the open water there were certificates gained in RYA powerboating, yacht cruising, dingy sailing, diving and canoeing, and other qualifying courses covered the band and the Senior Leadership course in preparation for senior cadets delivering the new cadet syllabus in their units.

DUNDEE unit has new Colour – 43 years after the previous flag was presented.

Cadets from Training Ship Duncan were joined by colleagues from other units including Rosyth, Methil, Perth, Stonehaven, Arbroath and Newcastle as well as local Air Training Corps cadets to celebrate this historic occasion.

The colour was donated by the late Lt Iain Fenwick RNR, a former officer in the unit.

VIP guests included Lt Fenwick's family, Capt Peter Adams RN, Lt Cdr Niall Bennett RN, the Lord Provost Bob Duncan and representatives from the police and fire services.

The old Colour was laid up in St Andrew's Kirk, with readings from AC Fridge and AC Carena, after which the new Colour was paraded through the city centre, led by a 20-strong band.

There was a short stop to lay a wreath at the statue of Admiral Adam Duncan in respect of all who have lost their lives at sea.

Dundee unit is named after the Admiral, who commanded the British fleet at the Battle of Camperdown in 1797.

The parade then continued into the City Square, where the blessing of the new Colour took place.

The parade commander for the day was CPO Alastair Brown, who has been a stalwart of the Sea Cadet unit for many years.

He commanded an excellent parade that showcased the skills and development of the young people within the Corps.

A number of cadets took part in the service itself.

Commanding Officer Sub Lt (SCC) Kevin Philip RNR cut a celebration cake, ably assisted by 12-year-old Cdt Josef – the youngest cadet in the unit – while Cdt Clarkson read the Sea Cadet prayer.

The parade then performed a march-past with the new Colour, the salute being taken by the Lord Provost and Capt Adams.

Sub Lt Philip said: "I am incredibly proud of all the young people in the Dundee unit, as well as those from other units who have turned out to support us."

"Everyone played a part in the day and were an asset to the Sea Cadet Corps."

"I was so emotional walking



● Sub Lt (SCC) Kevin Philip RNR, Commanding Officer of Dundee unit, is assisted by Cdt Josef to cut the celebration cake

behind the parade, with everyone lining the route to show their support.

"The aim of the Sea Cadets is to give every young person the best start in life, and what better way to show that than to put on such a confident display in front of VIPs and our community?"

"We have had such a busy year so far, with many cadets away on

courses, gaining qualifications and spending time offshore."

"This parade has been the culmination of a lot of hard work over the past few months, and I could not be more proud of what the unit has achieved."

The unit has junior and Sea Cadet divisions, plus a Royal Marines Cadet detachment, and parades on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

For details see www.facebook.com/dundeescadets/ or visit on parade night at East Camperdown Street.

All adult staff are volunteers, and adults who might be able to help out should also pay a visit to chat about how they can help in a variety of roles.

Cdt Josef said: "I was really excited to cut the cake."

"It was a bit scary doing it in front of the whole parade, but it was all fine on the day."

"I've been in the Sea Cadets for three years and have been able to do some amazing things like kayaking, visiting HMS Bulwark and helping with the cruise ship Magellan."

"I've made lots of friends in the Corps and can't wait to go offshore next year for five days on TS John Jerwood."

Last-minute change for Canterbury

CANTERBURY unit took a last-minute change to their Royal Naval Parade in their stride.

The Inspecting Officer for the evening, Cdr Trevor Price RN, was caught up in a minor traffic accident on the M25, and when it became clear that Cdr Price was not going to make the parade, Deputy District Officer Lt Cdr Kevin Martin RNR, who was also attending, stepped into the breach.

The evening went well, with key elements being run by the cadets themselves, from ceremonial to presentations on the cadets activities throughout the year.

VIP guests included Sheriff of Canterbury Cllr Rosemary Doyle and long-time supporter and unit president Julian Brazier MP.

Cadets entertained parents and supporters with a demonstration of the skills and experiences they had picked up, using humour to make sure everyone stayed alert.

One highlight for Lt Cdr Martin was the free cake baked by the Cook Steward Course...

He said the unit had come a long way in five years, and the key indicator for him was that the cadets were cheerful, confident and engaged.

Unit chairperson Jo Rohan said: "The adult volunteers and cadets have, as always, done the unit proud, doing amazing things during the year from international exchange visits, to district and area training opportunities."

"The future is looking very positive. However we are now at a crucial phase in the unit's development."

"Having pretty much completed phase one of our move from the old HQ in Puckle Lane, phase two includes further expanding our state-of-the-art building to provide a larger and better-laid-out unit which can cope with larger numbers of cadets."

"However to do this we do need a team to deliver this as members of our trustee team, covering fundraising, project planning, finance and many other volunteer roles which can take the unit forward."

"If anyone is interested they should contact myself or the OIC, PO (SCC) Jonathan Murphy on 07925 144037 or email seacadetscanterbury@yahoo.co.uk"

Talented duo join Bandies



TWO cadets who joined the Combined Cadet Force band course at the annual Dartmouth camp are joining the Royal Marines Band Service.

Emma, an exceptional cornet player, played a solo during the ceremonial Beat Retreat on the Britannia Royal Naval College quarterdeck.

She and drummer Alex (both pictured right) were part of a group of teenagers who had met for the first time just one week earlier on the course.

The musicians not only have to learn their repertoire, but also perform for the Ceremonial Divisions, Sunday service and the formal dinner as well as Beat Retreat.

The guest of honour at the formal dinner, Cdre Bob Fancy, Commander Core Training and Recruitment, complimented all the cadets on their musicianship and professionalism.

Landlubbers become clubbers

THE Sea Cadets' Saturday Club gave young people aged 10 to 18 living in the most deprived areas of London – many of whom do not have English as their first language – access to free water sports sessions earlier this year.

The scheme enabled them to gain experience and nationally-accredited qualifications to boost future careers, as well as make friends and boost confidence.

More than 200 young people from Newham, Barking & Dagenham, Tower Hamlets and Hackney took part in Saturday Club sessions, undertaking rowing, sailing, kayaking and windsurfing between 10am and 1pm each day (pictured right).

More than 50 qualifications from Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and British Canoe Union (BCU) were awarded to participants free of charge – a considerable saving as the average cost of a qualification at beginner's level is around £150.

Thirty participants enjoyed themselves much that they joined their local Sea Cadets units.

Indeed, one started at the Saturday Club, joined a unit, completed a dinghy instructor qualification and is now teaching cadets at the unit how to sail.

She then spent her summer holidays at the Royal Docks boat station teaching cadets from across London how to sail.

According to organisers, the sessions had a huge impact on the behaviour of some of the young people, some of whom presented challenging issues.

As their relationships with peers and instructors developed, many recognised that their behaviours were having a negative impact on the enjoyment, safety and skill progression of new friends.

Once this was recognised there were huge improvements in attitude, reflected in their progression as well as in comments from parents, carers and teachers.

The sessions allowed participants to build firm friendships, cemented by having to work together to participate in challenging outdoor activities.

For those new to the area or



the country, this was a powerful factor in integration and building a sense of community.

And for those with English as a second language, conversation with friends, discussion with instructors and giving presentations as part of the qualifications allowed them the opportunity to improve their vocabulary and confidence in spoken English.

For some who might not have had the opportunity to shine in an academic environment, it

was clear that the opportunity to participate in adventurous activities, overcome challenge and develop new skills, allowed them to redefine themselves as learners and achievers.

Improvements in confidence in the participants, some of whom were nervous and shy at the start of the programme, was phenomenal. As their skills and confidence improved, many emerged as leaders, ready and willing to step in and support new joiners.

New man in charge

RETIRING from his position as Dartmouth Camp Commanding Officer after eight years, Alan Mackie received a leaving present of a personalised Paul Barclay print from his fellow officers, presented by Cdr (CCF) Bob Mitchell RNR.

With 40 years' service in the CCF and 36 years' association with the Summer Camp, held at Britannia Royal Naval College, Alan will hand over the reins of the camp to Cdr Mitchell.

Divisions at this year's camp were inspected by Cdre Bob Fancy, who in his role as Commander Core Training and Recruitment has oversight of all of the maritime youth organisations supported by the MOD.

Despite the drizzle he was determined to spend time chatting to as many cadets on parade as possible.

Having seen CCF cadets training when he was Captain of HMS Raleigh, he expressed his admiration at the speed with which such a diverse group of cadets could come together and present such a smart set of Divisions.

He thanked the officers and instructors responsible for making the camp and various courses such a success.

After Divisions he joined parents and cadets for tea.

CO needed

THE CO of HMS Collingwood Volunteer Cadet Corps, Sub Lt (VCC) Mike Fuller, retires this month, and the unit is looking for someone to take over.

The job is purely voluntary, and involves being DBS and security cleared.

As CO, you would be responsible for the Naval training and ethos of some 45 cadets, and act as a charity trustee and cadet unit building manager.

Broader responsibilities would include liaison with HMS Collingwood's management team.

Parade nights are Monday and Thursday 6pm-8pm during term time.

If you would be interested in discussing this role, please contact Mike on 01329 333593 during working hours.



Hundreds help mark anniversary of battle

MORE than 400 Sea and Royal Marines Cadets stepped onto Trafalgar Square at the end of October to commemorate the anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar.

It also offered a chance to celebrate the charity's 160th birthday year.

Cadets from across the

country, some as young as ten, marched and performed their best on behalf of the traditions of the Senior Service.

Junior Sea Cadets spelled out a special Happy Birthday message in semaphore – the traditional naval communication system using flags (*below*) – whilst the Physical Training Display Team performed a traditional skip jump.

The 88-strong Massed Band

of the Sea Cadet Corps then marched and played onto the square before making their way down The Mall (*above*).

Cadets only had a short time to perfect their routines as they met just two days before the event.

The display and parade were

examples of their determination to deliver a show-stopping event for charity supporters and members of the public.

The Sea Cadets have marched through London on the closest Sunday to October 21 for more than 100 years.



● (Above) Royal Marines Cadets on parade in central London

● (Below) VIP and guests watch as the Sea Cadet Corps remembers Nelson's victory at the battle of Trafalgar



Capital name for new Corps yacht

THE first of two new yachts which will be part of the Sea Cadet Corps' offshore fleet is progressing well at a Cornish boatbuilder.

The Rustler 42 yacht is now out of the mould at the Rustler shipping yard in Falmouth and starting to take shape.

The fit has begun and the expected delivery date is mid-May next year.

Shortly afterwards cadets from across the UK will be able to start booking places on an offshore voyage on the brand new yacht.

The Rustler 42s have a larger capacity than the boats they will replace, the Tradewinds 35s.

This means six cadets can go offshore on each voyage – a 20 per cent increase in capacity.

In buying the yachts, the Corps fundraising team's efforts have been generously supported by the Lord Mayor's Appeal – the 688th Lord Mayor of the City of London is Alderman the Lord Mountevans, who chose to support

diabetes charity JDRF and the Sea Cadets.

The name of the vessel was announced by the Lord Mayor at the Grand Finale Maritime Dinner last month – and appropriately enough it is to be known as TS City of London.

Earlier this year Sea Cadets from Falmouth & Penryn unit were present to witness the contract signing by Sea Cadets CEO Martin Coles and head of offshore training Andy Phenna, with Rustler Yachts directors Adrian Jones and Nick Offord.



Memories of French adventure

SHELTERING from the rain and cold at a district camp might well prompt thoughts of warmer alternatives.

So when that situation arose in February last year in Stoke-on-Trent, Chestafords District Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Matthews RNR asked if anyone would be interested in an activity holiday in France. Neither staff nor cadets needed much persuasion.

Fast-forward to this summer, and a party of 22 cadets and three staff from Stafford and Rugeley unit, as well as cadets from Stoke-on-Trent unit, boarded a coach at an M6 service station, bound for France.

A smooth Channel crossing provided some cadets with the first proper sea time of their lives, and an overnight journey saw the party – by now 69 cadets and nine staff – arrive at PGL Domain de Segries, a campsite surrounded by lavender fields and vineyards.

The site had a disco area, small basketball and volleyball courts, football pitch (minus grass) and an outdoor swimming pool.

Activities over the week included a long-distance canoe expedition through river rapids and gorges, returning to the campsite by bus each night.

Diversions included caves to explore, or the chance for cadets to safely jump into the river from a vantage point (*pictured above*).

Five days in the group moved to PGL Mimosa, with a stop at Aqualand water park en route – the temperature was hitting 30°C by this stage.

Activities in Languedoc-Roussillon included sailing dinghies in the (sometimes choppy) Mediterranean and sampling multi-hull cruising in catamarans.

There were also abseiling, windsurfing, banana-boat rides and raft-building before the group headed home, crossing the tallest bridge in the world (the Millau viaduct) on the way.

Back at the M6 services, tired cadets and sandy luggage were dropped off – and thoughts turned to another trip in 2018...

Well said!

IN front of a daunting 140-strong audience, which included First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones and MSSC President Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, OC Peter from Wandsworth unit spoke about his achievements over the past five years with Sea Cadets and what the Corps means to him.

The speech was part of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets Annual Court – essentially the AGM – where members of the charity meet to celebrate the previous year's achievements.



Suez 60th anniversary is marked

THE Ministry of Defence and Royal British Legion hosted an event at the National Memorial Arboretum to mark 60 years since the ceasefire was announced in the Suez Canal Zone in Egypt.

The service was attended by veterans, Defence Minister Earl Howe and senior officers of the Royal Navy, Army and RAF.

During the service prayers were said in remembrance of the 450 British military casualties in the zone from 1951 to 1956.

The service and losses of former Colonial forces, including British East Africa (now Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda), Mauritius, the Seychelles and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), were also honoured.

Lt Colonel Colin Kemp, Trustee of the RBL, said: "It is crucial that we never forget the selfless sacrifice of those who serve, and work to preserve their memory in perpetuity."

"This was a fitting commemoration for this important anniversary."

"During the five-year conflict in the Suez Canal Zone our Armed Forces suffered a significant loss of life, with many veterans and their families requiring support long after the British withdrawal."

British involvement in Egypt and the Suez Canal dates back to 1875, with Egypt becoming a British Protectorate between 1914 and 1952.

British and Colonial forces were deployed in the zone for all of this period until a temporary withdrawal in April 1956.

In 1951, Egypt declared void the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936, that granted Britain a lease on the Suez base for a further 20 years. Tensions led to the declaration of an emergency period from 1951 to 1954.

In October 1956, the British and French-owned canal was nationalised by Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser; in response British and French forces secured the Canal Zone on Operation Musketeer.

A ceasefire was announced on November 6 1956 and all troops were withdrawn shortly afterwards.

Naval Quirks

...THEN THERE WAS THE STOKER ON HMS LION WHO HAD HIS LEG BLOWN OFF AT JUTLAND.



No flagging with Project Semaphore

PROJECT Semaphore is gathering pace as the first batch of iPads is built and made ready for distribution.

Sharon Brown, the project manager, said: "Due to changes in the project requirement and approach, it was necessary to ensure that the Aged Veterans Fund approved these changes as they have provided the funding and have certain rules on how the money can be used.

"However, I am pleased to say that the changes were all approved and we have the green light to proceed."

There has been a change in the number of Apple iPads that can be bought under the scheme.

"As many of you know, the IT world moves at a pace and in the past four months two of the iPad models we had selected have been taken out of production by Apple, so we have had to select another model.

"This has resulted in higher costs per iPad, which will mean the numbers we will provide in the project will reduce from the 1,500 we originally had hoped."

Those who feel they may be eligible should get their application in soon – the rule is first come, first served.

The scheme will also be opened up to other Naval veteran organisations in due course.

"If you don't take to the iPad – which is unlikely once you see what you can do with it – then it can be reissued to another shipmate, so don't think you will be wasting anyone's time or money," said Sharon.

"I strongly encourage all of you who are still thinking about it to apply."

Tree planted

ON THE 55th anniversary of completing their four-year training as Artificer Apprentices at HMS Caledonia, a group from Series 31 Class, St Vincent Division gathered to plant a flowering cherry tree in memory of their classmates.

Permission to hold the event was granted by Peter Bush, Head of Establishment MOD Caledonia, Rosyth.

The occasion was organised by Stuart Millar in conjunction with Lionel Fisher, Scottish rep of the Old Caledonia Artificer Apprentices Association, together with WO Robert Reid and his team from the Staff of Naval Regional Command Scotland & Northern Ireland, who hosted the event.

The tree was supplied and planted by George McDonald, proprietor of Fairleys' Garden Centre at Cairneyhill.

"We have staggered the purchase of the iPads and the first 600 are being built as you read this."

Sharon said those who are very optimistic about the project were strongly encouraged to consider getting broadband installed in their home in preparation as this is the simplest method of connection to the internet.

Due to restrictions on the way funding can be used, the project cannot give grants to individuals to pay for broadband.

There is a short-term solution but home broadband could be most economical and convenient in the long term, said Sharon.

Also on the agenda is the training of volunteers who will be supporting and training shipmates.

Training dates and venues should be published soon.

For those already online there is a project Facebook page – [RNA Central Office HQ – Project Semaphore](#).

If you want to volunteer or register someone for an iPad, go to [www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/members/campaigns](#)



● War veterans set to receive their medals – from left, Fred Davenport, Tony Fairminer, Andrew Bramley and Ron Smith

Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones

France honours veterans

FOUR World War 2 veterans who saw action in the liberation of France were rewarded with the country's highest military honour on Armistice Day.

The quartet, all in their 90s, received the *Legion d'honneur* (Legion of Honour) from Honorary French Consul, Capt Francois Jean, at a ceremony at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth.

Before the ceremony the veterans were guests at a service of remembrance at the base.

Three of the recipients served with the Royal Navy and the fourth with the Army.

Two years ago the French government announced that all Servicemen and women involved in the liberation of the country during the war would be presented with its Legion of Honour.

Lt Cdr Fred Davenport, aged 95, from Portsmouth, joined the Navy aged 21 in November 1940.

In 1942 he was on HMS Eagle, escorting the Malta-bound convoy in Operation Pedestal, when she was hit by four torpedoes and sank.

After three to four hours of treading water, he was rescued.

He went on to serve for the rest of the war in HMS Sirius, which took part in the 1944 Normandy and South of France landings, before moving on to the Aegean to help liberate Athens.

Ron Smith, aged 91, from West Sussex, was drafted on June 2 1944 onto HMLCT 947 as a wireman, joining her in Gosport.

The vessel reached Sword Beach at 0735 on D-Day, but as the ramp went down one of her tanks was hit by a shell, causing it to slew and block the exit.

Shortly afterwards the craft's Bangalore torpedoes exploded. An armoured vehicles, tried to nudge the tank clear the exit, but failed, so they withdrew from the beach.

Tony Fairminer, 91, of Midhurst, is a North Atlantic and Normandy veteran – he was a leading seaman gunner on board cruiser HMS Enterprise, working in the director control up a mast.

The ship took part in D-Day and supported the invasion of Normandy.

Andrew Bramley, aged 93, of Hampshire, is a Normandy and Operation Market Garden veteran, working as a despatch

rider with war correspondents.

He survived the D-Day landings, the Battle of the Bulge and the invasion of Holland, being blown off his bike by explosions twice and almost drowning when crossing the Waal River by pontoon.

Cdr Steve Shaw, who helped organise the event, said: "The veterans were extremely proud and honoured to be recognised in this way."

"I was delighted to be able to help get this presentation organised – especially on Armistice Day, which made their ceremony even more special."

"It gave us the opportunity to show them how much the country and the Royal Navy cares about them – it gives them a sense of value."



Atlantic crossing for reunion

ONE attendee at the sixth HMS Lowestoft Association reunion travelled across the Atlantic to meet up with old shipmates at the Aztec Hotel in Bristol.

Association member Lin Keung was the No 1 Chinese Laundry Hand during the frigate's 1965-66 Far East deployment.

Before joining Lowestoft he had served in the aircraft carrier HMS Centaur.

On leaving Lowestoft Lin served for two years with the US Marines in Vietnam before emigrating to Canada in 1969.

He now lives in Ontario and at the age of 70 is still working – he heads up a business which runs a group of hotels in the USA and Canada.

Lin, who was accompanied by his son and two grandsons, enjoyed meeting many members of the 1965-66 ship's company with whom he served more than 50 years ago.

He is pictured at the reunion (above) with former RO(T) Rob Dickson from the 1965 crew.

Malta group compare notes

MEMBERS of the RFA Association Malta enjoyed a visit to Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) RFA Mounts Bay when the ship called in at the Mediterranean island.

The group, which included RFA veterans, their wives and two staff from the national War and Maritime Museums in Valletta, were given a tour of the ship and met Captains Buck and Clarke over refreshments on the bridge.

During the visit, they were able to see for themselves how the ships and lifestyle of the RFA have changed over the years.

They also were able to exchange stories and compare the careers of a couple of young officers with how things were in their time, and how it matches up with the RFA of today.

Branch secretary Alfred Cassar thanked the RFA for making the visit possible



● WHEN veterans from County-class guided missile destroyer HMS Antrim got together for their 22nd reunion in Torquay, they felt they should mark the occasion. So shipmates old and not-so-old prepared by taking part, over a couple of months, in the #22PushupChallenge, pledging to do 22 pushups 22 times in a campaign backed by Combat Stress to raise awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). At the reunion, they got together to do the Antrim 22 under the supervision of CPO(M) Bomber Wells (pictured above). The campaign originated in the United States, and the number 22 signifies the number of veterans who were reported, on average, to have committed suicide every day



Process is set in motion

FORMS for submitting branch motions at Conference next year are available in the latest edition of the circular, which can be downloaded from the RNA website www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/members/downloads/circulars/

If you wish to submit a motion, make sure it is an item on your next branch meeting agenda – correctly-signed forms should be back with General Secretary S/M Paul Quinn by February 10 2017.

Don't forget that the whole branch has to vote on the proposed motion, as well as the supporting branch.

The Standing Orders Committee is available to provide advice to ensure that motions are drafted so that they can be accepted for the agenda.

And it might still be 2016, but don't forget to book your delegate and observers for Conference.

The event is being staged in Perth next year on the weekend of June 2-3.

Glasgow dinner

CITY of Glasgow branch once again commemorated Admiral Lord Nelson's victory at Trafalgar with a weekend and a dinner in the Arrochar Hotel.

There were 33 members and guests at this event where two of the guests took a small part in the entertainment.

Colin Botfield from Glasgow URNU Glasgow gave a talk on Nelson, and S/M Andy MacDonald from Grangemouth branch was roped in as compère at the SODS Opera.

S/M Edward Pollard donated a bottle of Pusser's Gunpowder for the toast to Nelson.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our October edition (right) was HMS Tiger, which was given the name Bellophon while in build.

The correct answers were provided by J Ellis of Grimsby, who wins £50.

This month's mystery submarine (above) is pictured in Australia, a country with close ties to the boat.

She was based in both Perth and Sydney at various times, and is believed to have been the last RN boat based in Australia, leaving in the late 1960s, having served for a period in the RAN.

Launched in the UK in March 1944, she was scrapped in Wales in the early 1970s.

1) What was her name, and 2) what was the name of the yard that built her?

We have removed the pennant number from the image.

Complete the coupon and send

Memorial dedicated to medical service

A TWO-year project to create a memorial for the Royal Naval Medical Service (RNMS) reached its conclusion in a service at the National Memorial Arboretum.

In October 2014 the Medical Director General (Naval) of the day, Surg Rear Admiral Calum McArthur, authorised a project to commission an RNMS memorial at the arboretum.

As fundraising commenced it was estimated that some £20,000 would be needed.

A letter from MDG(N) was sent out to serving and ex-serving members of the RNMS announcing the project and asking for either personal donations or for fundraising events to be organised.

These events included a stretcher run over the obstacle course at HMS Collingwood by staff from the Medical Centres at Collingwood, Sultan and Nelson, a 24-hour static bike ride at HMS Raleigh, a triathlon, marathon distance walks, raffles, and cake and coffee mornings in various ships and establishments.

A steady flow of personal donations were received and an application to the RNRMC resulted in a grant that pushed the fund closer to its target.

That target was met in 14 months, and in January the NMA approved the project.

An unveiling and dedication ceremony took place in September, led by Chaplain of the Fleet the Ven Ian Wheatley and MDG(N) Surg Cdr Peter Buxton unveiled the memorial.

Around 150 serving and ex-serving members of the RNMS



• Chaplain of the Fleet the Ven Ian Wheatley leads the service

Picture: LPhot Sean Gascoigne

attended, including Surgeon General Surg Vice Admiral Alasdair Walker, who gave the closing remarks.

Former CPOMA John Bright said: "I arrived on my own to be almost suddenly (even in the car park) surrounded by the RN Medical Services, of all disciplines, serving and retired, very senior and quite junior; QARNNS, Green Berets, Submarines, General Service and Reserve, but all of like mind.

"Some I'd not seen for 20 years or more, bringing back memories of good times and recollections of some who had already crossed the bar.

"I stayed on a little after a lot

the opportunity to meet ex-serving members of the Medical Branch with great stories."

Former CPOMA John Bright said: "I arrived on my own to be almost suddenly (even in the car park) surrounded by the RN Medical Services, of all disciplines, serving and retired, very senior and quite junior; QARNNS, Green Berets, Submarines, General Service and Reserve, but all of like mind.

"Some I'd not seen for 20 years or more, bringing back memories of good times and recollections of some who had already crossed the bar.

"I stayed on a little after a lot

of people had left, and stood quietly between the new RNMS and the QARNNS memorial remembering some good friends and, of course, my wife Dianne (an ex LNN, QARNNS), who died last year.

"I watched others who stopped by each memorial, and moved on, and it struck me then that a memorial allows us to move on, knowing that when we need to, we can step back and revisit this permanent memorial to our colleagues (and loved ones in my case), past and present and even knowing that we will, one day, also be but a memory represented in and by these memorials."

Exeter tribute

THE White Ensign flew proudly over Exeter Cathedral as the Exeter Flotilla commemorated Nelson's famous victory at its annual Trafalgar Service.

Starting with seven bells rung on the bell of former destroyer HMS Exeter, the service was attended by the Deputy Lord Lt of Devon Major Colin Pape, High Sheriff of Devon Angela Gilbert, and Lord Mayor of Exeter Cllr Cynthia Thompson.

Lessons were read by Lt Gen Sir David Capewell and Rear Admiral Tim Lowe.

Prayers were read by Flotilla Chairman Lt Chris Seaton, Mid Marco Mills (BRNC), Mid Hannah Rivett (HMS Vivid) and Wtr Samuel Tucker (HMS Raleigh).

Chaplain of the Fleet the Ven Ian Wheatley gave the address and music was provided by the Royal Marines Band Lympstone.

Founded in 1946, the Exeter Flotilla is an association of retired officers of the RN, RM and their Reserves, who meet monthly at CTCRM, Lympstone.

www.exeterflotilla.org

Medals for D-Day five

SHIPMATES have received medals for bravery more than 70 years ago at a critical stage in the battle to beat Nazi Germany.

The five sailors, who fought in the D-Day offensive in June 1944, have been honoured with the Legion d'honneur, one of France's highest military accolades.

Alan Brown, who was too frail to attend the ceremony at Skipton Golf Club, received his medal at Bradford Royal Infirmary in September and died shortly afterwards, aged 92.

Joining Norman Robinson at the event organised by Skipton branch, were Denis Macro, Edward Shipley and Robert Taylor, all of Colne.

Eighteen months ago Alan and Norman were honoured by the Russian Federation, receiving the Ushakov medal for their service in the Arctic convoys during World War 2.

Alan, of Skipton, joined the Royal Navy as an 18-year-old, and was drafted to HMS Matchless, a destroyer on convoy duty.

Later he joined 63 Flotilla Coastal Forces, commanding a torpedo boat, and was present on D-Day.

That same day, Norman, 92, was in a vessel sweeping the Channel and helping keep at bay any German warships attempting to attack the invasion force.

He joined the RN in Jan 1943, aged 18, and trained as a telegraphist, later being drafted to cruiser HMS Belfast.

Minibus for Central Office



CENTRAL Office has acquired a (not so) new set of wheels.

General Secretary S/M Paul Quinn said the minibus (pictured left in its new livery) is 20 years old and has 55,000 miles on the clock.

It cost the RNA £100 and a bottle of rum, as it was obtained from 'some local charity friends...'

S/M Quinn said: "This will save hiring vehicles for moving people and things, and for Conference."

And when not in use, it could be parked where it is visible to the public visiting the Historic Dockyard in Portsmouth, doubling as an advertising billboard.

New faces

NEW National Chairman S/M Keith Ridley, National Council member for 6 Area, and National Vice Chairman S/M Paul Stephenson (12 Area) have taken up the reins of the RNA.

See next month's edition of *Navy News* for more of an introduction to S/M Keith.

Retiring Chairman S/M Chris Dovey has been elected a National Vice President of the Association.

S/M Paul takes over from S/M Mike Hesketh.

↓ RNA Central Office,
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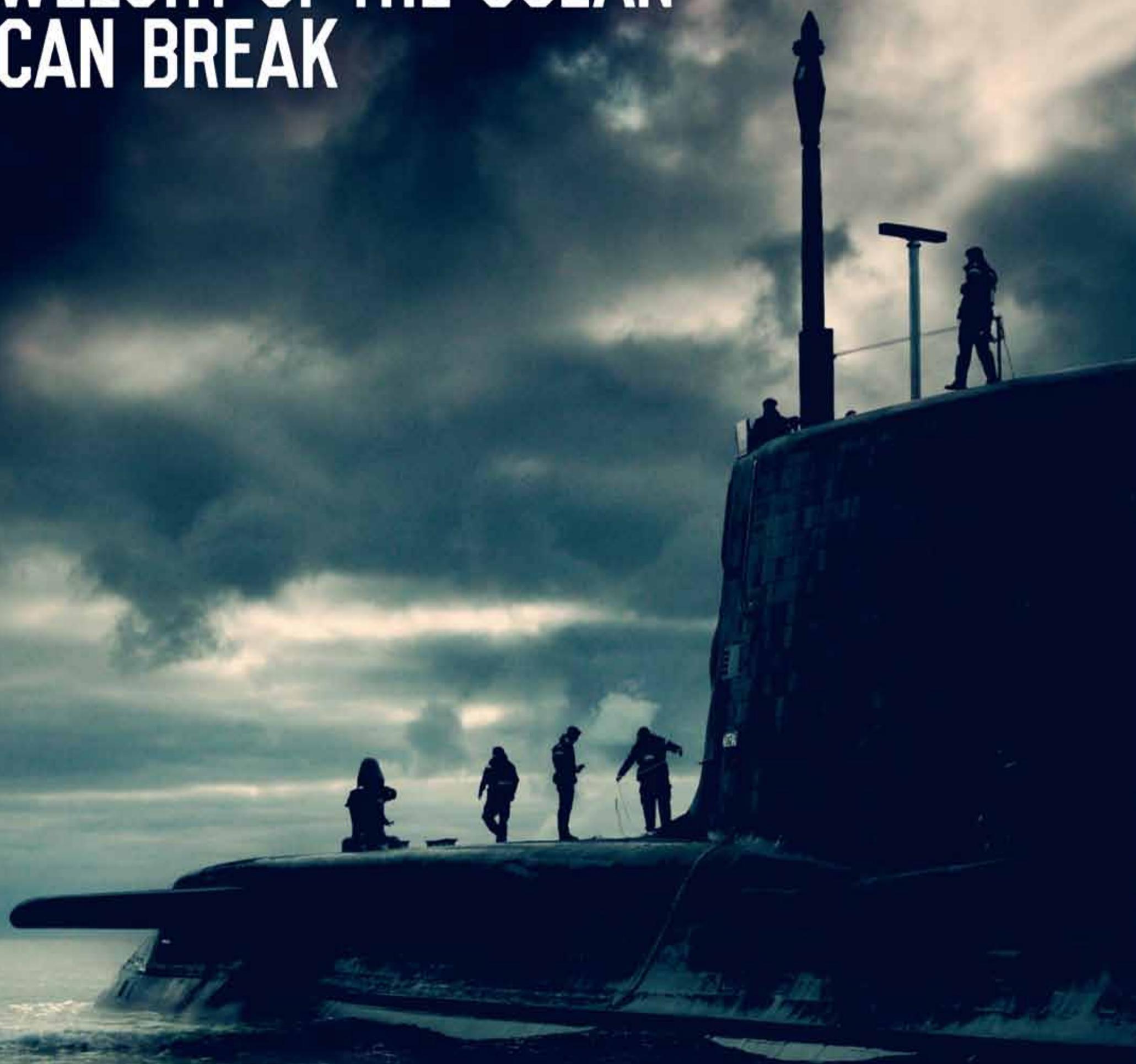
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We wish all our members a very Merry Christmas and a very happy & peaceful New Year

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How the West was won

PROFESSOR Barry Gough, the distinguished Canadian naval historian, recently published a history of the 19th-Century *Pax Britannica* that was reviewed in this column.

My assessment was generally positive but was critical of the author's rather insecure grasp of the technological dimension of his subject and its surprisingly pro-American approach, writes Prof Eric Grove.

The latter aspect is addressed in this latest work *Britannia's Navy on the West Coast of North America 1812-1914* (Seaforth, £25 ISBN 978-1-4738-8136-5) that is an expansion of his first significant book, originally published in 1971. He uses the earlier work as the basic framework with additions, notably on constabulary operations against indigenous people.

The major targets of the RN's gunboat diplomacy in this region in this period were Russia and the United States, with the British colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia squeezed in between Russian Alaska and American expansion into the Pacific North West. The USA acquired Alaska in 1867 just after the two British colonies had unified the previous year. This larger British Columbia joined Canada in 1871, strengthening the British position on the west coast.

The book begins with the War of 1812 with British ships acting in the Pacific rather as

THE GROVE REVIEW

the fictional Jack Aubrey did in *Master and Commander*. The enemy ship was changed in the film to a more politically-acceptable Frenchman. In reality the American frigate Essex was taken and the American outpost on the Columbia River briefly changed from Astoria (named after John Astor, the settlement's major backer) to Fort George. American ownership was restored when joint ownership of Oregon territory was established shortly after the war and it persisted until the 1846 Treaty that set the American-Canadian boundary at the 49th Parallel, except around the southern part Vancouver Island. Prof Gough explains how this crisis was managed with the assistance of a reinforced squadron in the region backing British claims. The British might have gained more but London was reluctant to over commit in any region at this time. This reluctance was to remain an important factor in North America for the rest of the century and beyond.

The emphasis shifted to confronting Russia with the crisis and war of 1854. This led to the unsuccessful Anglo-French attack on Petropavlovsk, Kamchatka. The author is very critical of British Rear Admiral Price who died mysteriously of gunshot wounds in his cabin just before the attack was due to occur. Prof Gough takes the view of the flag captain that this was

due to stress and was therefore a mark of Price's inability to command such an operation. I am not so sure that this is quite so definitely decided. The author has neglected some research on this matter (the secondary sources are not quite so exiguous as the author says). Certainly the operation was a fiasco, caused less by the limited gun power of the attacking force but the lack of training of the landing forces.

The overall story is taken through the effects of local gold discoveries (that sometimes encouraged Naval personnel to desert) and the near-war crisis (aka the Pig War) that developed in 1859 from the successful American attempts to forcefully acquire the San Juan Islands in the strait dividing Vancouver Island from American territory below the 49th Parallel.

The Naval command acted with forbearance and diplomacy. The author argues that as long as "the British Flag was not compromised, the interests of Britain and the Pacific colonies were served best by reducing the chances of war." The locals were none too happy at this appeasement of their aggressive neighbour. The affair was finally sorted by the Treaty of Washington in 1871.



The author explains well how the base at Esquimalt to the west of Victoria on Vancouver Island was slowly developed into an important base for the Royal Navy ships deployed in the Pacific; in Prof Gough's words Esquimalt became "an anchor of Empire." This was against

the background of tensions in the 1860s over the American War between the States, the danger posed by Fenian Irish nationalists operating out of the USA, and the renewed Russian threat in the Balkan crisis of 1877-8.

As the new century dawned "the growth of American military as sea power caused British policy increasingly to centre on avoiding war with the United States, so that by 1905 it was fully recognised in Whitehall that the best defence of Canada, and that of Halifax and Esquimalt, rested in cordial Anglo-American understanding." The author quotes Fisher selectively to support this point but there are other quotations from the erratic genius that show a desire to build a force of 'fleet units' to counter, among others, "the Japs and the Yanks" in the Pacific. Indeed, the Admiralty quietly maintained a two-power standard against both Germany and the USA until the outbreak of World War 1.

Sadly the author's uncertain grasp of technological history lets him down again. There is really no excuse in a 2016 book to

repeat the old myth that Melville, First Lord of the Admiralty, wrote in 1828 that the Admiralty ought to discourage the development of steam propulsion. Nicholas Rodger exploded this malicious lie years ago and, as the author accepts, steam greatly increased the fleet's leverage in littoral operations. It is also therefore a pity that the book repeats the misconception that ships of this period were disadvantaged attacking forts. Such was indeed warships' major role from 1815 to 1885.

There are other niggling misconceptions. The corvettes Trincomalee and others were not 'cut down' when re-armed and derated from frigates. They had modifications but retained their upper decks, hence the term 'spar deck corvette.' Visitors to the beautifully-preserved Trincomalee at Hartlepool can see for themselves; the ship can still play a convincing Napoleonic frigate. Another point is the assumption that Royal Navy ships always flew the White Ensign. Until 1864 the ensign could be any colour depending on the 'colour' of the national squadron of which the Admiral commanding was a part, Red, White or Blue.

These however are relatively small quibbles with an excellent, absorbing and well-illustrated study that demonstrates once more that the 19th Century was an active period for the Royal Navy in a wide range of roles, many of which have a highly-modern resonance.

Strangling the enemy

THE 100th anniversary of Jutland back in May was the catalyst for a plethora of studies and reassessments of the battle.

Away from the 'Jutlandmania' and focus on the capital ships, historian Steve Dunn has concentrated on the unglamorous and frequently-overlooked Tenth Cruiser Squadron – obsolescent cruisers and converted liners – which helped bring Germany to her knees.

The Great War at sea was won by the Allies in large part thanks to cutting Germany off from the rest of the world.

Around 25 of these 'unsex' vessels were concentrated on the Northern Patrol – from Iceland to the Faroes to Shetland and Orkney and the Norwegian coast – with the task of intercepting merchant vessels bound for or leaving Germany.

It was slow. It was punishing; conditions, particularly in the winter, were akin to the Arctic convoys a generation later. By and large it worked. By the war's end, the German home front had largely collapsed: inflation was rampant, production had dropped 70 per cent and rations had been cut dramatically.

After the war, the German government estimated the British blockade had killed an estimated 750,000 people.

Grand Fleet commander Admiral Beatty hailed it a "great passive victory" for the RN.

It is a victory excellently recounted by Dunn in *Blockade: Cruiser Warfare and the Starvation of Germany in World War 1* (Seaforth, £19.99 ISBN 978-1-84832-3407).

SPORT



Victorious finish to season

PETTY OFFICER Sophie Fuller and her horse Infinity brave torrential rain during the Army's Royal Tournament.

Sophie was among the small contingent of five Royal Navy horseriders competing at the Defence Animal Centre in Melton Mowbray.

The four-day tri-Service event sees horses and riders compete individually in showjumping classes, including the final leg of the Loriners Inter-Service contest.

The initial jump class went the Royal Navy's way with Cdr Jo Bollen and her horse Titus notching up a stylish and fast round, which proved unbeatable for the other 89 competitors as Jo won the Services Cup.

The prize-giving line-up also featured Lt Becca Brown on her horse Gibson in fourth place, who made a great return to the ring after his delicate spine surgery had put the combination out all season.

Lt Brown also joined an Army and RAF rider in the three-person team event; with only one pole down between them her 'purple' team topped the class and Lt Brown became the second Royal Navy rider of the day to get

her hands on silverware.

Lt Cdr Beth Leckey, Lt Steve Currie and PO Fuller on their horses Opal, Bob and Infinity respectively, bravely fought it out in the Senior Classes (which included jumping in a torrential downpour) around some demanding tracks.

Lt Currie and PO Fuller made their mark in the Princess Anne Cup, coming away with rosettes for third and fourth places.

The Royal Navy Loriners Team, Cdr Bollen, Lt Currie, Lt Brown and PO Fuller jumped a challenging course which

proved to be very influential.

The previous two legs of the competition had seen the Army Team come out top in both Combined Training (dressage and show jumping) and a One-Day Event (Dressage, Show Jumping and Cross-Country); however on this occasion the RN Team

significantly notched up the only clear round of the class, thanks to PO Fuller and her horse Infinity, to clinch the win on Army turf!

Whilst this win was not enough to alter the overall Loriners standings for the season it has set the bar high for the team to start 2017 as they finished 2016.

The tournament was a great end to the season and reminded the other Services not to underestimate the Royal Navy.



● The RN Loriners team with Master Loriner John Punch

Pictures: Geoff Marston Photography

Picture: LPhot Dan Rosenbaum



● The Royal Marines rugby team overcame the Fleet Air Arm



● Maj Finley Walls, left, and Cpl Adam Stokes in Washington

Washington victory

A TEAM of Royal Navy and Royal Marines runners were victorious against the USMC in the **Washington Marathon** to win the Challenge Cup.

Maj Finley Walls (CTC) and Cpl Adam Stokes (40 Cdo) paced each other over most of the course with Adam finishing in 2hr 35min 48sec and Finley close behind in 2.36.55.

Cpl Andy Stay finished in 2.47.43 to complete a five-minute and 29 second victory over the USMC – and extend the winning ratio to 25-14.

PO Bryan Phillips (2.53.54) and Maj Ryan Kestle (2.59.40) completed the male line-up with Surg Lt Cdr Alison Dewynter (RNNS Culdrose) finishing her first MCM in 3.18.19 and Lt Natalie Wright (HMS Echo) running 3.21.56.

Anyone interested in representing the Service at distance running should contact WO1 Andy Marshall, submarine disposal group, C/Sgt Pete Belcher at CTC or Lt Cdr Ginge Gough at Temeraire.



● PO Bryn Phillips



● Cpl Andy Stay and Maj Ryan Kestle

Chid can't stop Storm

A FOOTBALL team from HMS Chiddingfold took on an unbeaten side of British ex-pats known as Muscat Storm when the ship visited Oman.

The side from MCM2 Crew 3 dominated from the start and it wasn't long before AB 'Digger' Gardner scored by lobbing the keeper.

"I saw the chance and I took it. I have been scoring every game and that's why I get picked to start," he said.

ETWE 'Laid Back' Jackson also had a go at goal with a left-footed free kick which hit the post.

Chid made some changes after the 30-minute mark in order to keep legs fresh and counter the effects of the 35 degree heat. However this proved to



be counterproductive and, with players finding themselves out of position, the Storm managed a scrappy goal from a corner to break even. Five minutes later a fumble in the box saw Storm take the lead.

AB(Sea) Reece 'Pieces' Williams said: "Although we went behind we didn't panic, we continued to press them and play with freedom."

"I found myself on the edge of the box and thought I would have a go and test the keeper. I couldn't have planned a better finish and the ball hit the cross bar and thundered past the keeper, who was left wanting."

Two-all and the half-time whistle sounded.

Great year for rugby veterans

THE Royal Marines Association **rugby** team took on a Gibraltar Select XV during the association's latest tour, pictured right.

The home side took the honours 37-12 but the tour capped a great year for the RMA.

The association's first tour featured a party of 74 but this year the number swelled to 117.

The aim of the association is to reunite old and new Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel who have a passion for rugby.

This year's tour included Cdre Jamie Miller and a number of former Bootnecks such as Jim Martin, Rog Tinson and Bob Ewan.

Tour regulars included Shaun Parkin, Dan Parks, Steve Jones and Marsh Cormack.

The Royal Navy back row from Twickenham in 1997, Bob Armstrong, Steve 'Shady' Lane and Steve Jones, were reunited for the game in Gib.

Any former or serving RN/RM players wishing to become involved please contact the RMA RFC Secretary at secretary-rmarfc@outlook.com or find them on Facebook on **Royal Marines Association RFC** page.

■ The Fleet Air Arm Rugby Team battled it out against the Royal Marines rugby team during the Inverdale Rugby challenge at RNAS Yeovilton. The Marines won the match 47-20



Navy's new PTIs pass out Fittest of the fit

A SPECTACULAR display of strength, courage and agility marked the end of a gruelling course which trains Royal Navy instructors in keeping sailors fit to fight.

Fifteen physical trainers marked their passing out in style at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth – the Navy's School of Physical Training – in front of more than 200 guests.

The graduates have qualified as leading physical training instructors and will now be dispersed among RN shore establishments to coach sailors in health and fitness.

The dazzling 70-minute display included many of the traditional skills taught on the six-month course, including club-swinging, rope-climbing, gymnastics, dancing the hornpipe and performing at height on a window ladder.

WO1 Paul Willets, Temeraire's training officer, said: "It was pleasing that so many guests were able to see the display which represents such an important day in the career of Navy physical trainers.

"It is a small, select specialisation within the Royal Navy, but it is rich in quality and its standards are of the highest order.

"We firmly believe that the 15 qualifiers have demonstrated all the necessary attributes that are needed to join this unique branch."

The course content includes circuit and weight training, strength and conditioning, fitness testing,



● The new PTIs put on a demonstration of their skills

sports science and diet and nutrition.

Students also cover basic coaching in a variety of sports including football, hockey, volleyball and boxing, plus topics such as event management, sports administration and income generation.

Among the students was LPT Matthew Jones, 31, who said: "The last six months have been very demanding, both physically and mentally, but I can't wait to start in my new role."

"My success and achievements are

a credit to the support I've had from my family."

The other students passing out were Ben Priddey, 31, Elise Broughton, 27, Etham Yates, 25, Andrew Lowes, 26, Carl Stubbs, 27, Catherine Forrest, 25, Susan Badger, 27, Megan Meyer, 26, James Johnson, 29, Michael Payne, 28, Dean Roach, 28, Hayley Saunders, 31, Rachel Luckham, 24, and Aaron Snowdon, 25.

Pictures: LPhot Sean Gascoigne



Solid show on track

FIVE Royal Navy Car Racing team members took part in the famous six-hour Birket relay race at Silverstone.

POET(WE) Sean Graham (HMS Collingwood) drove a Locust, with LAET Seb Unwin (847 NAS) in a BMW 318 and Mne Adam Dewis in a Peugeot 206.

The drivers were supported by team manager AET Lewis Pemble (845 NAS) and Richie Scott (PJHQ) and the team was joined by Andy Muirhead-Smith and Paul Roddison in two MX5s from Glyndŵr University.

Seb began the race 61st out of 70 places, alongside super cars M3s and Radicals. Team RAF were in 50th place and the Army drivers 46th.

Seb managed to work his way

up to 41st place before handing over to Sean; the slower car saw the team drop back to 52nd spot but in 23rd place with handicapping.

Andy drove consistently in the MX5 and at halfway was 58th (25th on handicap). A few issues with the handicap, a trip into the gravel and an exhaust falling off, saw the team drop down to 45th overall.

This year was all about consolidation as the team gained new drivers.

There are places available on the team and the 2017 season will be about gaining experience while developing a six-car team for the Birket relay. Anyone interested should visit www.armyforcesracechallenge.net



● Mne Adam Dewis in his Peugeot at Birket

Numbers swell for scenic route

RACERS from military bases across the West Country check their watches at the start of the fourth race in the South West Cross Country League.

More than 70 competitors representing military units were rewarded with a bright autumnal afternoon as they negotiated the lanes and fields surrounding RNAS Culdrose.

POPT Jamie Marles, who organised the SWCCL race at the base, said: "Last year we had about 45 runners, but this year we've got around 70. This seems to be a popular course and probably the most scenic cross-country route in the series."

The Culdrose course takes in many of the features that make this part of West Cornwall unique, including the steep hills and muddy gullies that lead down to the near-by 'Loe Bar' and Porthleven.

"We've seen this event used as a stepping stone to other events in Royal Navy athletics, in particular, the Inter Services and our Royal Navy Championships, but some just come along for a recreational jog or a just run out from the office in the afternoon."

Winners of the female and male races were Capt Sophie Morris from 29 Cdo RA and AB Ryan Williams from HMS Raleigh.



Tide was high for great fun Personnel put on a powerful display

THE Royal Navy/Royal Marines Surf Association undertook their annual surfing event at Penhale Beach, Cornwall.

Surfers were greeted by almost perfect conditions on arrival at Penhale, with chest to shoulder high waves breaking across the bay and a gentle off-shore breeze ensuring that the waves remained "glassy" throughout the day.

With categories pre-arranged for novices, women, bodyboard, men's longboard and men's shortboard, there was a strong turnout for the event with 46 entrants spread across all disciplines.

The event drew dedication from individuals such as 2Lt Henry McCready, who the evening before had just finished his ten-day final exercise during RM officer training.

With a full day's schedule, the event organiser, C/Sgt Warren Keays-Smith, got the event off to an early start.

The large number of competitors mandated that 20-minute heats were conducted for all events with the last of the finals leaving the water at 5.30pm.

Stand-out performances on the day came from Lt Cdr Guy Richards (HMS Flying Fox), who competed in six heats during the event and reached the final in both the men's shortboard and longboard categories – ultimately being placed second and fourth respectively.

Similarly, Sub Lt Sandra

Olmesdahl (RNAS Culdrose) ripped her way through the women's event to retain the title that she won earlier in the year.

With years of South African surfing experience under her belt, Sandra also lined up against the men in the longboard event and would have placed second overall if Inter-Service rules permitted her to compete against men.

As the reigning Inter-Service Ladies Champion, the RN/RM Surf Association expects to see great things from Sandra in future events.

Laura Aspen (associate member) took first place in the novice category. The award for the best novice style went to POPT Kelly Gooch (HMS Raleigh) and the best novice wipe-out was awarded to Sub Lt Gareth Hughes (Commando Helicopter Force).

Results: Women – 1st Sub Lt Sandra Olmesdahl; 2nd AET Kat Batten; 3rd Sub Lt Zoe Williams.

Bodyboard – 1st Lt Ollie Judd; 2nd AET Matt Gough; 3rd Lt 'Tom' Sawyer.

Men's Longboard – 1st Corporal Ads Lison; 2nd (but not contesting) Sub Lt Olmesdahl; 2nd Lt Cdr Guy Richards; 3rd Lt David Emery.

Men's Shortboard – 1st LAET Simon Parry; 2nd Mne Andrew Briggs; 3rd Lt Ollie Judd.

Anyone wishing to join the RNRMSA should contact membership secretary, Lt Cdr Rich Carthew at NCHQ.



● Ash Kelley won two awards at the powerlifting contest

Picture: Keith Woodland

HMS Collingwood personnel put their strength to the test in an intense powerlifting competition.

With plenty of encouragement on hand, personnel of mixed abilities were present to show off their skills.

The event tested the participants with weighted exercises such as squats and deadlifts, pushing each individual to achieve their best result with physical trainers to guide them through and ultimately judge the competition.

LPT Will Ballanger said of the competition: "An event such as this will often encourage young men and women to continue down a road of self-improvement and focus which inevitably transfers into all other aspects of life."

"Teams are brilliant; however it is key that each individual is focused, self-sustained and strong so that the team can achieve anything together."

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank all competitors who took part in the above event. Without doubt your enthusiasm made the event a huge success."

To conclude the event, trophies were awarded by Captain of Naval Physical Development Capt Mike Young to each winner.

All participants have been notified about the Royal Navy Powerlifting Association.

Results: Best deadlift, AB Casey Marshall; Best benchpress, AB Lewis Blyth-Atkins; Best female, Diver Sophie Duffy; Best squat and best male, Ash Kelley.

Westminster in at deep end

HMS Westminster's swimming team took to the water in a flotilla competition and finished a close second to HMS Nelson's UPO side.

Six of the ship's crew – team captain LWtr Sarah Feltham, Sub Lt Henry Kilby, LMA Harriet Wilding and ABs Stacey Ligget, David Roch and Sam Cother – took part in multiple races of various disciplines at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth.

Although the team were two members short, everyone put in a bold performance swimming strokes that they would not normally do to accrue points for their team and their ship.

"All of them competed in gutsy swims, out of their usual comfort zones," said Sarah.

The team finished with six medals – five gold and one silver.

The one that didn't get away

A ROYAL Navy officer has received the UK Armed Forces Angling Colours – the first year the Colours have been awarded.

Cdr Steve Mardlin, chairman of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Coarse Angling Association, competed for the UKAF team in the Thames Championships.

The award follows a restructuring of the association, with two events qualifying for Colours – Team Commercial Stillwater National (a stocked and managed lake) and the Thames Championships (river angling).

Both events select the best coarse anglers from the three Services.

Cdr Mardlin received the Colours from Naval Secretary Rear Admiral Simon Williams at a ceremony at Navy Command Headquarters at Whale Island, Portsmouth.

Rear Admiral Williams said "I am delighted that Steve has earned this honour; he is not only a gifted angler but he is in the vanguard of bringing this sport to a wider audience within the Navy."



● Rear Admiral Williams presents the colours to Cdr Mardlin



Pictures: LPhot Sean Gascoigne

Awe indoors as top rowers sweat it out



THE COMMANDING Officer of HMS Clyde swapped the cold of the South Atlantic for the heat of the gym at the Royal Navy Indoor Rowing Championships.

Lt Cdr Conor O'Neill, pictured left, recovered from illness just in time to compete at the championships in the 30-plus men's heavyweight 2km and 500m races.

One of the smoothest rowers on show, his performance was aided throughout by 'coaching' from former New Entry classmate triple Olympic gold medallist Lt Peter Reed.

The GB rower, who won gold in the men's eights in Rio earlier this year, handed out the awards as 42 rowers took part in the contest at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth.

WO1 PT Tiny Nash, of Temeraire, set the standard in the opening race, the 50-plus men's heavyweight 2km, with a time of 6min 21.1sec. AB Tom Walker, of HMS Argyll, and Sub Lt Robert Guest, HMS Sultan, were first and second respectively in the men's open.

Lt Craig Guest, of HMS Collingwood, rowed 6min 15.8sec to take the honours in the 30-plus men's heavyweight 2km race, with Sgt Sam Arnold and C/Sgt Duncan Jamieson taking second and third place with their personal best performances. Lt Cdr Jim Hyde (DES Bristol) rowed under 6min 30sec barrier with a time of 6min 27.5sec to finish fourth.

The 40-plus men's heavyweight row was won by Lt Cdr Jim Thomson, from Navy Command Headquarters, with CPOPT Daz Hoare (HMS Excellent) in second and Lt Stu Moss, of HMS Sultan, in third. Lt Col Tom Blythe (PJHQ) rowed an exceptional debut race personal best of 6min 25.6sec to finish in fourth place.

The Doug Wylie Memorial Award for Courage and Commitment went to Lt Cdr Ruth Guest, of the Institute for Naval Medicine. She rowed a personal best of 7min 39.5sec to win the open lightweight race, just prior to moving up to the 30-plus age group.

Lt Nick Howe won the men's open lightweight 2km in 6min 52.7 sec, just 0.4 sec in front of POPT Chazz Charrett (HMS Temeraire). POPT Ian Robinson (JSU Northwood) won the 30-plus men's lightweight in 7min 01.3 sec, a personal best.

The fastest male lightweight of the day was CPO Tim Cox (HMS Collingwood) in the 40-plus category with a world-class time of 6min 42.0sec.

Lt Alex Kelley (BRNC - URNU Wales) also rowed a personal best of 7min 21.1sec to win the 30-plus heavyweight, ahead of Lt Cdr Charlotte Peattie (PJHQ). NA(SE) Aaby Aldridge (HMS Queen Elizabeth) won the heavyweight open title in 7min 47.2 sec.

Men's 500m sprint titles were won by heavyweights Nash (50+), 1min 27.4sec, Moss (40+) 1min 22.7sec, Jamieson (30+) 1min 20.1sec, Sub Lt Rob Guest (open) 1min 25.4sec and lightweights Robinson (30+) 1min 33.4sec, Charrett (open) 1min 31.1sec and CPO Mark Campbell (HMS Collingwood) (40+) 1min 39.2sec. Women's 500m sprint winners were heavyweights Aldridge (open) 1min 47.5sec, Kelley (30+) 1min 38.9sec and lightweight rower Guest (open) 1min 45.1sec.

Capt Mike Young was a key member of the Temeraire four competing against Collingwood and team of 40-plus male heavyweights, with the latter taking the honours. The Temeraire team took the mixed title.

Invitation rower Anna Lewis, from Taunton, broke the women's 30-plus lightweight 2km race UK record with a time of 7min 01.5sec.

Royal Navy indoor rowers are now training for the Welsh, British, European, English and World Championships taking place over the next three months.

